# DORA

By the Author of "Heidi"

Johanna Spyri

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By JOHANNA SPYRI

AUTHOR OF

"Heidi," "Mäzli," "Vinzi," "Cornelli," etc.

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# DORA

## CHAPTER I

### UNDER THE LINDEN TREES

In a beautiful park in Karlsruhe a gentleman was seen walking under the shady linden trees every sunny afternoon. The passers-by could not help being touched when they saw him leaning upon a little girl, his daily companion. He was apparently very ill, for they walked slowly and he carried in his right hand a cane, while he often took his left from the child's shoulder, inquiring affectionately, "Tell me, child, if I press on you too heavily." But the little girl always drew back his hand and reassured him gladly, "I can hardly feel it, papa. Just lean on me as heavily as you want."

After walking up and down for a while the pair always settled beneath the lovely trees.

The sick man, a certain Major Falk, lived with his daughter Dora and an elderly housekeeper who attended to his wants. They had only recently come to Karlsruhe. Dora had never known her mother, who had died soon after the child's birth, and she therefore clung to her father with double affection and he with great tenderness did his best to make up to Dora for her early loss. A year before he had been obliged to leave his child and fight in a war against the enemy. When he returned he was very ill and miserable, having received a dangerous wound in the chest, which physicians pronounced as hopeless. Major Falk, who had no relatives or connections in Hamburg, had lived a very retired life there, and the only relative he had in the world was an elderly step-sister who was married to a scholar in Karlsruhe by the name of Titus Ehrenreich. When Major

Falk realized the hopelessness of his condition, he decided to move to Karlsruhe, where his step-sister could come to his and his eleven-year-old daughter's assistance if his illness became acute. The resolution was soon carried out and he found pleasant lodgings near his sister. He enjoyed these beautiful spring days with his lovely daughter as daily companion on his walks, and when the two sat hand in hand on the bench the father told about his past experiences and Dora never grew tired of listening. She was quite sure nobody in the world was as wonderful and splendid and interesting as her father. Most of all she loved to hear about her mother, who had been so gay and merry, bringing sunshine wherever she went. Everyone had loved her and no one who had loved her could forget her. When the father was lost in such recollections he often forgot completely where he was till it

grew late and the damp evening air made him shiver and reminded him that it was time to go home. The pair walked slowly till they came to a narrow street with high houses on both sides. Here the father usually stopped, saying: "We must go to see Uncle Titus and Aunt Ninette." And climbing up the stairs he daily reminded his little daughter: "Be very quiet, Dora! You know Uncle Titus writes very learned books and must not be disturbed, and Aunt Ninette is not used to noise, either." Dora climbed upstairs on tiptoe and the bell was rung most discreetly. Usually Aunt Ninette opened the door herself and said, "Come in, dear brother, but please be very quiet. Your brother-in-law is much lost in his work as usual." With scarcely a sound the three went along the corridor to the living-room which was next to Uncle Titus's study. Here, too, one had to be very quiet, which

Major Falk never forgot, though Aunt Ninette herself often broke out into sad complaints about many things that troubled her.

June had come and the two could stay out quite long under the linden trees. But they found themselves obliged to return sooner than was their wish, because otherwise Aunt Ninette worried dreadfully. On one such warm summer evening when the sky gleamed all golden, and rosy and fluffy clouds were sailing along the sky, Major Falk stayed seated on the bench until quite late. Holding his child's hand in his, he quietly watched the radiant sunset with Dora, who gazed up with wonder at her father. Quite overwhelmed by her impression, she cried out, "Oh, father, you should just see yourself; you look all golden the way the angels in heaven must look." Smilingly her father answered, "I think I shall

not live much longer, and I feel as if your mother were looking down upon us from that sky." But before long her father had grown pale again and all the glow in the sky had faded. When he rose, Dora had to follow, quite depressed that the beautiful glow had paled so soon. But her father spoke these words of comfort, "It will glow again some day and much more splendidly than today, when your mother, you and I will be all together again. It won't ever fade then."

When the pair came up the stairs to greet Dora's uncle and aunt, the latter stood upstairs at the open door, showing visible signs of agitation, and as her visitors entered her living-room she gave free vent to her excitement.

"How can you frighten me so, dear brother!" she wailed. "Oh, I imagined such terrible things! What can have kept you so long? How can you be so forgetful and

not remember that you must not be out after sunset. Just think what dreadful things might happen if you caught cold."

"Calm yourself, dear Ninette," said the Major as soon as he had a chance to speak. "The air is so mild and warm today that it could do me no harm and the evening was simply glorious. Please let me enjoy the few lovely evenings that are still left to me on earth. They neither hasten nor hinder what is sure to happen very soon."

These words spoken so quietly brought forth new outbursts of despair.

"How can you speak that way? How can you frighten me so? Why do you say such awful things?" cried the excited woman. "It cannot happen and it must not happen! What is to be done then with—yes, tell me—you know whom I mean." Here the aunt threw an expressive glance at Dora. "No, Charles, a terrible misfortune like that must

not break in upon us—no, it would be too much. I would not even know what to do. What is to happen then, for we shall never get along."

"But, my dear Ninette," the brother retorted, "don't forget these words:

'Though sad afflictions prove us
And none his fate can tell,
Yet God keeps watch above us
And doeth all things well.' "

"Oh, yes, I know, and I know it is true," agreed the sister. "But where one sees no help anywhere one feels like dying from fright, while you talk of such dreadful things as if they were quite natural."

"We'll have to say good-night now, and please try not to complain any more, dear Ninette," said the Major, stretching out his hand. "We must remember the lines:

'Yet God keeps watch above us
And doeth all things well.' "

"Yes, yes, I know it is true, I know it is true," assented the aunt once more, "but don't catch cold on the street, and do go downstairs without making any noise. Do you hear, Dora? Also shut the downstairs door quietly and when you go across the street try not to be in the draft too long." During these last injunctions the father had already gone downstairs with Dora and home across the narrow street.

The following day when they sat on the bench again under the lindens, Dora asked, "Papa, didn't Aunt Ninette know that:

> 'Yet God keeps watch above us
> And doeth all things well.' "

"Of course she knows it," replied the father, "but at times when she gets anxious she forgets it a little. She regains her balance when she thinks of it."

After musing a while Dora asked again, "But, papa, what shall one do to keep from

being frightened and dying from fear as Aunt Ninette says?"

"Dear child," the father answered, "I will tell you what to do. Whatever happens we must always think that it comes from God. If it is a joy we must be grateful, and if it is a sorrow we must not be too sad, because we know God our Father sends everything for our good. In that way we need never suffer from fear. Even if a misfortune comes and we see no help at hand, God is sure to find some succor for us. He alone can let good come out of evil, even one that seems to crush us. Can you understand me, Dora, and will you think of that if you should ever be unhappy? You see hard days come to everybody and to you, too, dear child."

"Yes, yes, I understand and I'll think of it, papa," Dora assured him. "I'll try not to be frightened."

"There is another thing which we must not forget," continued the father. "We must not only think of God when something special happens to us. We must ask Him at every action if He is satisfied with us. When a misfortune comes we are near to Him already if we do that and we experience a certainty at once of receiving help. If we forget Him, on the contrary, and a sorrow comes, we do not find the way to Him so easily and we are apt to remain in darkness.

"I'll try never to lose the way, papa," said Dora eagerly, "and ask God every day: 'Am I doing right?' "

Tenderly stroking his child's head, the father remained silent, but in his eyes lay such a light that she felt herself surrounded by a loving care.

The sun sank behind the trees and father and child happily walked home.

## CHAPTER II

### LONG, LONG DAYS

A few days after this lovely evening Dora sat at her father's bedside, her head prostrate beside his. She was sobbing bitterly, for he lay quite still with a smile on his white face. Dora could not fully comprehend what had happened yet, and all she knew was that he had joined her mother in heaven.

That morning when her father had not come as usual to her bedside to wake her, she had gone to his room instead. She found him lying motionless on his bed, and, thinking him asleep, she had kept very quiet. When the housekeeper, who came in with breakfast, had cast a glance in his direction, Dora heard her exclaim, "Oh God, he is dead! I must quickly fetch your aunt." With this she had run away.

This word had fallen on Dora like a thunderbolt and she had laid her head on the pillow beside her father, where she stayed a long while, sobbing bitterly. Then Dora heard the door open and her aunt came in. Lifting her head, she used all her strength to control her sorrow, for she knew that a wild outburst of grief was coming. She was dreadfully afraid of this and most anxious not to contribute to it further. She wept quietly, pressing her head into her arms in order not to let her sobs escape. The aunt loudly moaned and cried, wailing that this dreadful misfortune should just have happened and saying she saw no help for any of them.

What should be seen to first, she wondered. In the open drawer of the table beside her brother's bed several papers lay about, which the aunt folded up in order to lock away. Among them was a letter addressed to her. Opening it she read:

"DEAREST SISTER NINETTE:

"I feel that I shall leave you soon, but I don't want to speak of it in order not to cause you dark hours before I have to. I have a last request to make to you. Please take care of my child as long as she needs you. As I am unable to leave her any fortune to speak of, I beg you to use the small sum she owns to let her learn some useful work by which Dora, with God's help, will be able to support herself when she is old enough. Be not too much overcome with sorrow and believe as I do that God does His share for all His children whom we recommend to His care, and for whom we ourselves cannot do very much. Accept my warm thanks for all your kindness to me and Dora. May God repay you!"

The letter must have soothed the aunt a little, for instead of wailing loudly she turned to Dora, who, with her head pressed into her arms, was still quietly weeping.

"Come with me, Dora," said the aunt; "from now on you shall live with us. If we didn't know that your father is happy now, we should have to despair."

Dora obediently got up and followed, but she felt as if everything was over and she

could not live any longer. When she entered the quiet dwelling, the aunt for the first time did not have to remind her to be quiet, feeling sure this was unnecessary. As the child came to her new home, it seemed as if no joyful sounds could ever again escape her.

The aunt had a store-room in the garret which she wanted to fit up for Dora. This change could not take place without some wailing, but it was at last accomplished and a bed placed in it for her niece. The maid went at once to fetch the child's belongings and the little wardrobe in the corner was also set in order.

Dora silently obeyed her aunt's directions and, as bidden, came down afterwards to the quiet supper. Uncle Titus said nothing, being occupied with his own thoughts. Later on Dora went up to her little chamber where she cried into her pillow till she fell

asleep. On the following day Dora begged to be allowed to go over to her father, and the aunt accompanied her with expressions of renewed sorrow. Dora quietly said good-bye to her beloved father, sobbing softly all the while. Only later on in her own little room did she break out into violent sobs, for she knew that soon he would be carried away and she would never see him any more on earth. From then on Dora's days were planned quite differently. For the short time she had been in Karlsruhe her father had not sent her to any school, only reviewing with her the studies she had taken in Hamburg. Apparently he had been anxious to leave such decisions to his sister when the time came. Aunt Ninette had an acquaintance who was the head of a girls' private school and Dora was to go there in the mornings. For the afternoon a seamstress was engaged to teach Dora to make shirts, cut

them out and sew them. Aunt Ninette considered this a very useful occupation, and by it Dora was to make her livelihood. All clothing began with the shirt, so the knowledge of dressmaking also began with that. If Dora later on might get as far as dressmaking, even her aunt would be immensely pleased.

Dora sat every morning on the schoolbench, studying hard, and in the afternoons on a little stool beside the seamstress. Sewing a big heavy shirt made her feel very hot and tired. In the mornings she was quite happy with the other children, for Dora was eager to learn and the time went by pleasantly without too many sad thoughts about her father. But the afternoons were different. Sitting in a little room opposite her teacher, she had a hard time handling the shirts and she would get very weary. The long hot summer afternoons had come and

with her best exertions she could hardly move the needle. The flannel felt so damp and heavy and the needle grew dull from heat. If Dora would look up to the large clock, whose regular ticking went on, time seemed to have stood still and it never seemed to be more than half past three How long and hot these afternoons were! Once in a while the sounds of a distant piano reached her—probably some lucky child was playing her exercises and learning lovely melodies and pieces.

This seemed in these hard times the greatest possible bliss to Dora. She actually hungered and thirsted for these sounds, which were the only thing to cheer her, as few carriages passed in the narrow street below and the voices of the passers-by did not reach them. The scales and exercises she heard were a real diversion, and if Dora heard even a little piece of music she was

quite overjoyed and lost not a note. What a lucky child! she thought to herself, to be able to sit at the piano and learn such pretty pieces. In the long, dreary afternoons Dora was visited by melancholy thoughts and she remembered the time when she had strolled with her father under the linden trees. This time would never come again, she would never see and hear him any more. Then the consolation her father himself had given her came into her mind. Some day, of course, she would be with both her parents in the golden glow, but that was probably a long way off, unless something unusual happened and she were taken ill and should die from sewing shirts. But her final consolation was always the words her father had taught her:

"Yet God keeps watch above us
And doeth all things well."

She tried to believe this firmly and, feel-

ing happier in her heart, made her needle travel more easily and more lightly, as if driven by a joyful confidence. Just the same the days were long and dreary, and when Dora came home in the evening to Aune Ninette and Uncle Titus everything about her was so still. At supper Uncle Titus read and ate behind a big newspaper and the aunt talked very little in order not to disturb her husband. Dora said nothing, either, for she had become adapted to their quiet ways. In the few hours she spent at home between her lessons Dora never had to be told to be quiet; all her movements had become subdued and she had no real heart in anything. By nature Dora was really very lively and her interests had been keen. Her father had often exclaimed with satisfaction: "The child is her mother's image! —the same merriment and inexhaustible joy in life." All that was now entirely gone

and the child very seldom gave her aunt occasion to complain. Dora avoided this because she feared such outbreaks. Every time after such a demonstration she repressed for a long time every natural utterance and her joy of life would be completely gone. One evening Dora returned from her work full of enthusiasm, for the young pianist across the street had played the well-known song Dora loved and could even sing:

"Rejoice, rejoice in life
While yet the lamp is glowing
And pluck the fragrant rose
In Maytime zephyrs blowing!"

"Oh, Aunt Ninette!" she cried upon entering the room, "it must be the greatest pleasure in the world to play the piano. Do you think I could ever learn it?"

"For heaven's sake, child, how do you get such ideas?" wailed Aunt Ninette. "How can you frighten me so? How could

such a thing be possible? Only think what noise a piano would make in the house. How could we do it? And where, besides, should we get the time and money? How do you get such unfortunate ideas, Dora? The troubles we have are enough without adding new ones."

Dora promised to make no more suggestions. She never breathed another word about the subject, though her soul pined for music.

Late in the evening when Dora had finished her work for school, while the aunt either knitted, mended or sometimes dropped asleep, Dora climbed up to her garret room. Before closing her little window she always gazed out at the sky, especially when the stars gleamed brightly. Five stars stood close together right above her head, and by and by Dora got to know them well. They seemed like old friends come espe-

cially to beckon to her and comfort her. Dora even felt in some mysterious way as if they were sent to her little window by her father and mother to bring her greetings and keep her company. They were a real consolation, for her little chamber was only dimly lighted by a tiny candle. After saying her evening prayer while looking at the starry heavens, she regained a feeling of confidence that God was looking down at her and that she was not quite forsaken. Her father had told her that she had nothing to fear if she prayed to God for protection, for then His loving care would enfold her.

In this fashion a dreary hot summer went by, followed by the autumn and then a long, long winter. Those days were dark and chilly and made Dora long for warmth and sunshine, for she could not even open her little window and gaze at her bright stars. It was bitter chill in her little garret

room so near the roof, and often she could not fall asleep she was so cold. But spring and summer came at last again and still things went their accustomed rounds in the quiet household. Dora was working harder than ever at her large shirts because she could now sew quite well and was expected really to help the seamstress.

When the hot days had come something unusual happened. Uncle Titus had a fainting spell and the doctor had to be fetched. Of course Aunt Ninette was dreadfully upset.

"I suppose you have not gone away from Karlsruhe for thirty years and you only leave your desk to eat and sleep?" asked the physician after a searching glance at Uncle Titus and a short examination.

The question had to be answered in the affirmative. It was the truth.

"Good!" continued the doctor. "You must go away at once and the sooner the better. Try to go tomorrow. I advise Swiss mountain air, but not too high up. You need no medicine at all except the journey and I advise you to stay away at least six weeks. Have you any preferences? No? We can both think it over and tomorrow I'll come again. I want to find you ready to leave, remember."

The doctor was out of the door before Aunt Ninette could stop him. Eager to ask a thousand questions, she followed. This sudden resolution had paralyzed her and she could not at first find her tongue. She had to consult the doctor about so many important points, though, and he soon found that his abruptness availed him nothing. He was held up outside the door three times as long as he had been in the house. Returning after some time the aunt found her hus-

band at his desk, absorbed as usual, in his studies.

"My dear Titus!" she cried out amazed, "is it possible you have not heard what is to happen? Do you know we have to start at once and leave everything and without even knowing where to go? To stay away six weeks and not to know where, with whom and in what neighborhood! It frightens me to death, and here you sit and write as if nothing particular had happened!"

"My dear, I am making use of my time just for the very reason that we have to leave," replied Mr. Titus, eagerly writing.

"My dear Titus, I can't help admiring how quickly you can adapt yourself to unexpected situations. This matter, though, must be discussed, otherwise it might have serious consequences," insisted Aunt Ninette. "Just think, we might go to a dreadful place!"

"It doesn't matter where we go so long as it is quiet, and the country is always quiet," replied Mr. Titus, still working.

"That is the very point I am worried about," continued his wife. "How can we guard ourselves, for instance, against an overcrowded house. Just think if we should come into a noisy neighborhood with a school or mill or even a waterfall, which are so plentiful in Switzerland. How can we know that some frightful factory is not near us, or a place where they have conventions to which people from all cantons come together. Oh, what a tumult this would make and it must be prevented at all costs. I have an idea, though, dearest Titus. I'll write to Hamburg, where an old uncle of my sister-in-law lives. At one time his family lived in Switzerland and I can make inquiries there."

"That seems decidedly far-fetched to

me," replied Uncle Titus, "and as far as I know the family had some disagreeable experiences in Switzerland. They probably have severed all connections with it."

"Just let me look after it. I'll see to everything, dear Titus," concluded Aunt Ninette.

After writing a letter to Hamburg she went to Dora's sewing-teacher, a very decent woman, and asked her to take care of Dora while they were away in Switzerland. After some suggestions from both women it was decided that Dora should spend her free time at the seamstress's house, and at night the woman would come home with the child in order to have someone in the house. When Dora was told about these plans that evening, she said nothing and went up to her lonely garret. Here she sat down on the bed, and sad memories crowded upon her mind of the times when she and her father

had been so happy. They had spent every evening together and when he had been tired and had gone to bed early, she had come to his bedside. She was conscious how forsaken she would be when her uncle and aunt had left, more lonely even than she was now. Nobody would be here to love her and nobody she could love, either.

Gradually poor Dora grew so sad that she drooped her head and began to cry bitterly, and the more she wept the more forlorn she felt. If her uncle and aunt should die, not a soul would be left on earth belonging to her and her whole life would be spent in sewing horrid heavy shirts. She knew that this was the only way by which she could earn her livelihood and the prospect was very dreary. She would not have minded if only she had someone to be fond of, for working alone all day, year in and year out, seemed very dreadful. She sat

there a long time crying till the striking of the nearby church clock startled her. When at last she raised her head it was completely dark. Her little candle was burnt out and no more street lamps threw their light up from the street. But through the little window her five stars gaily gleamed, making Dora feel as if her father were looking down affectionately upon her, reminding her confidently as on that memorable evening,

"Yet God keeps watch above us
And doeth all things well."

The sparkling starlight sank deep into her heart and made it bright again, for what her father had said to her must be the truth. She must have confidence and needn't be frightened at what was coming. Dora could now lie down quietly and until her eyes closed of themselves she looked at her bright stars which had grown to be such

faithful comforters. The evening of the following day the doctor appeared again as promised with many suggestions to Mr. Ehrenreich about where to go. But Aunt Ninette lost no time in stepping up and declaring that she was already on the search for a suitable place. Many conditions had to be fulfilled if the unusual event was to have no fearful consequences for her husband, every detail had to be looked into, and when everything was settled she would ask for his approval.

"Don't wait too long, go as soon as possible; don't wait," urged the doctor in an apparent hurry to leave, but nearly falling over Dora who had entered noiselessly just a moment before.

"Oh, I hope I didn't hurt you?" he asked, stroking the frightened child's shoulder. "The trip will do that pale girl good. Be sure to give her lots and lots of milk there.

There is nothing like milk for such a frail little girl."

"We have decided to leave Dora at home, doctor," remarked Aunt Ninette.

"That is your affair, of course, Mrs. Ehrenreich! Only look out or her health will give you more worry than your husband's. May I leave now?"

The next moment he was gone.

"Oh, doctor, doctor! What do you mean? How did you mean that?" Aunt Ninette cried loudly, following him down the stairs.

"I mean," called the doctor back, "that the little thing is dreadfully anaemic and she can't live long if she doesn't get new blood."

"Oh, my heavens! must every misfortune break in upon us?" exclaimed Aunt Ninette, desperately wringing her hands. Then she returned to her husband. "Please, dear Titus, put your pen away for just a second.

You didn't hear the dreadful thing the doctor prophesied if Dora doesn't get more color in her cheeks."

"Take her along, she makes no noise," decided Uncle Titus, writing all the while.

"But, dear Titus, how can you make such decisions in half a second. Yes, I know she doesn't make any noise, and that is the most important thing. But so many matters have to be weighed and decided—and—and;" but Aunt Ninette became conscious that further words were fruitless. Her husband was once more absorbed in his work. In her room she carefully thought everything over and after weighing every point at least three times she came to the conclusion to follow the doctor's advice and take Dora with her. A few days later the old uncle's brief answer arrived from Hamburg. He knew of no connections his brother had kept up with people in Switzer-

land, for it was at least thirty years since he had lived there. The name of the small village where he had stayed was Tannenberg and he was certain it was a quiet, out-of-the way place, as he remembered his brother complaining of the lack of company there. That was all.

Aunt Ninette resolved to turn to the pastorate of Tannenberg at once in order to inquire for a suitable place to live. The sparse information from the letter pleased her and her husband well enough: quiet and solitude were just the things they looked for. The answer was not slow in coming and proved very satisfactory. The pastor wrote that Tannenberg was a small village consisting of scattered cottages and houses and suitable rooms could be had at the home of a school-teacher's widow. She could rent two good rooms and a tiny chamber, and for further questions the pastor enclosed the

widow's address. This proved an urgent need to Aunt Ninette's anxious mind and she wrote to the widow at once, asking for a detailed description of the neighborhood. Beginning with expressions of joy at the knowledge that Tannenberg was a scattered village, she yet questioned the widow if by any chance her house was in the neighborhood possibly of a blacksmith's or locksmith's shop, or stonemason's, or a butcher's, also if any school, mill, or still worse, a waterfall were near—all objects especially to be avoided by the patient. The widow wrote a most pleasant letter, answering all these questions in the most satisfactory way. No workshops were near, the school and mill were far away and there were no waterfalls in the whole neighborhood. The widow informed her correspondent further that she lived in a most pleasant location with no near dwellings except Mr.

Birkenfeld's large house, which was surrounded by a splendid garden, fine fields and meadows. His was the most distinguished family in the whole county; Mr. Birkenfeld was in every council, and he and his wife were the benefactors of the whole neighborhood. She herself owed this family much, as her little house was Mr. Birkenfeld's property, which he had offered to her after her husband's death. He was a landlord such as few others were.

Everything sounded most propitious and a day was set for the departure. Dora was joyfully surprised when she heard that she was to go along, and she happily packed the heavy linen for the six large shirts she was to sew there. The prospect of working in such new surroundings delighted her so much that even the thought of sewing those long seams was quite pleasant. After several wearisome days all the chests and

trunks stood ready in the hall and the maid was sent to get a carriage. Dora, all prepared, stood on the top of the staircase. Her heart beat in anticipation of the journey and all the new things she would see during the next six weeks. It seemed like immeasurable bliss to her after the long, long hours in the seamstress's tiny room.

Finally Aunt Ninette and Uncle Titus came out of their rooms, laden with numerous boxes and umbrellas. Their walk down stairs and into the waiting carriage proved rather difficult, but at last each object had found a place. A little exhausted uncle and aunt leaned back in the seat and expectantly drove off to their destination in the country.

## CHAPTER III

### THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HEDGE

LOOKING far out over the wooded valleys and the glimmering lake stood a green height covered by meadows in which during the spring, summer and fall red, blue and yellow flowers gleamed in the sunshine. On top of the height was Mr. Birkenfeld's large house, and beside it a barn and a stable where four lively horses stamped the ground and glossy cows stood at their cribs quietly chewing the fragrant grass, with which Battist, the factotum of long years' standing, supplied them from time to time. When Hans, the young stable boy, and the other men employed on the place were busy, Battist always made the round of the stable to see if everything had been attended to. He knew all the work connected

with animals and had entered Mr. Birkenfeld's father's service as a young lad. He was the head man on the place now and kept a vigilant eye on all the work done by the other men. In the hay-lofts lay high heaps of freshly gathered hay in splendid rows and in the store rooms in the barn all the partitions were stacked up to the ceiling with oats, corn and groats. All these were raised on Mr. Birkenfeld's property, which stretched down the incline into the valley on all sides. On the other side of the house stood a roomy laundry, and not far from there, but divided off by a high, thick hedge from the large house and garden, was a cottage also belonging to the property. Several years ago Mr. Birkenfeld had turned this over to Mrs. Kurd after her husband's death.

The warm sunshine spread a glow over the height, and the red and white daisies

gazed up merrily from the meadow at the sky above. On a free space before the house lay a shaggy dog, who blinked from time to time in order to see if anything was going on. But everything remained still and he shut his eyes again to slumber on in the warm sunlight. Once in a while a young gray cat would appear in the doorway, looking at the sleeper with an enterprising air. But as he did not stir, she again retired with a disdainful glance. A great peace reigned in the front part of the house, while towards the garden in the back much chattering seemed to be going on and a great running to and fro. These sounds penetrated through the hallway to the front of the house.

Approaching wheels could now be heard, and a carriage drove up in front of the widow's cottage. For a moment the dog opened his eyes and raised his ears, but not finding it worth while to growl, slept on. The

arrival of the guests went off most quietly indeed. Mrs. Kurd, the schoolmaster's widow, after politely receiving her new arrivals, led them into the house and at once took them up to their new quarters. Soon after, Aunt Ninette stood in the large room unpacking the big trunk, while Dora busied herself in her little chamber unpacking her small one. Uncle Titus sat in his room at a square table, carefully sorting out his writing things. From time to time Dora ran to the window, for it was lovelier here than in any place she had ever been. Green meadows spread out in front with red and yellow flowers, below were woods and further off a blue lake, above which the snow-white mountains gleamed. Just now a golden sunset glow was spread over the near hills, and Dora could hardly keep away from the window. She did not know the world could be so beautiful. Then her aunt called over to her,

as some of her things had been packed in the large trunk and she had to take them to her room.

"Oh, Aunt Ninette, isn't it wonderful here?" exclaimed Dora upon entering. She spoke much louder than she had ever done since she had come to her uncle's house to live. The excitement of the arrival had awakened her true, happy nature again.

"Sh-sh! how can you be so noisy?" the aunt immediately subdued her. "Don't you know that your uncle is already working in the next room?"

Dora received her things, and going by the window, asked in a low voice, "May I take a peep out of this window, aunt?"

"You can look out a minute, but nobody is there," replied the aunt. "We look out over a beautiful quiet garden and from the window at the other side we can see a big yard before the house. Nothing is to be seen there

except a sleeping dog, and I hope it will stay that way. You can look out from over there, too."

As soon as Dora opened the window, a wonderful fragrance of jessamine and mignonette rose to her from the flower-beds in the garden. The garden was so large that the hedge surrounding green lawns, blooming flower-beds and luxurious arbors seemed endless. How beautiful it must be over there! Nobody was visible but there were traces of recent human activity from a curious triumphal arch made out of two bean poles tightly bound together at the top by fir twigs. A large pasteboard sign hanging down from the structure swayed to and fro in the wind, bearing a long inscription written in huge letters. Suddenly a noise from the yard before the house made Dora rush to the other window. Looking out, she saw a roomy coach standing

in the middle of the yard with two impatiently stamping brown horses, and from the house rushed one—two—three —four—yes, still more—five—six boys and girls. "Oh, I want to go on top," they all cried out at once, louder and ever louder. In the middle of the group the dog jumped up first on one child, then on another, barking with delight. Aunt Ninette had not heard such noise for years and years.

"For heaven's sake, what is going on?" she cried out, perplexed. "Where on earth have we gotten to?"

"O come, aunt, look, look, they are all getting into the coach," Dora cried with visible delight, for she had never in her life seen anything so jolly. One boy leaped up over the wheel into the seat beside the driver, then stooping far down stretched out his arm towards the barking, jumping dog. "Come, Schnurri, come Schnurri!" cried

the boy, trying in vain to catch hold of the shaggy dog's paw or ears. At last Hans, the coachman, almost flung the pet up to the boy. Meanwhile the oldest boy lifted up a dangling little girl and, swinging her up, set her in the coach. "Me, too, Jul, me, too! Lift me still higher, lift me still higher!" cried out two little boys, one as round as a ball, the other a little taller. They jumped up, begging their elder brother, crowing with anticipation at what was coming. Then came twice more the swinging motion and their delight was accompanied by considerable noise. The big boy, followed by the eldest girl, who had waited until the little ones were seated, stepped in and the door was shut with a terrific bang by Jul's powerful arm. When the horses started, quite a different noise began.

"If Schnurri can go, Philomele can go too! Trine, Trine!" cried the little girl loudly, "give me Philomele." The energetic

young kitchen-maid, at once comprehending the situation, appeared at the door. Giving a hearty laugh, she took hold of the gray cat that sat squatting on the stone steps and looking up mistrustfully at Schnurri on top, and threw her right into the middle of the carriage. With a sharp crack of the whip the company departed.

Full of fright, Aunt Ninette had hastened to her husband's room to see what impression this incident had made upon him. He sat unmoved at his table with his window tightly shut.

"My dear Titus, who could have guessed such a thing? What shall we do?" moaned the aunt.

"The house over there seems rather blessed with children. Well, we can't help it and must keep our windows shut," he replied unmoved.

"But my dear Titus, do you forget that

you came here chiefly for the fresh mountain air? If you don't go out, you have to let the strengthening air into your room. What shall we do? If it begins that way what shall we do if they keep it up?" wailed the aunt.

"Then we must move," replied the husband, while at work.

This thought calmed his wife a little and she returned to her room.

Meanwhile Dora had busily set her things in order. A burning wish had risen in her heart, and she knew this could not be granted unless everything was neatly put in its right place. The crowd of merry children, their fun and laughter had so thrilled Dora that she longed to witness their return. She wondered what would happen when they all got out again. Would they, perhaps, come to the garden where the triumphal arch was raised? She wanted to see them from below, as the garden was only separated from Mrs.

Kurd's little plot of ground by a hedge. There must be a little hole somewhere in this hedge through which she could look and watch the children. Dora was so filled with this thought that it never occurred to her that her aunt might not let her go out so late. But her desire was greater than the fear of being denied. She went at once to her aunt's door, where she met Mrs. Kurd, who was just announcing supper. Dora quickly begged to be allowed to go down to the garden, but the aunt immediately answered that they were going to supper now, after which it would be nearly night. Mrs. Kurd assured her aunt that anybody could stay out here as long as they wished, as nobody ever came by, and that it was quite safe for Dora to go about alone. Finally Aunt Ninette gave Dora permission to run in the garden a little after supper. Dora, hardly able to eat from joy and anticipation, kept listening for the

carriage to return with the children. But no sound was heard.

"You can go now, but don't leave the little garden," said the aunt at last. Dora gave this promise gladly, and running out eagerly, began to look for some opening in the hedge. It was a hawthorne hedge and so high and thick that Dora could look neither through it nor over the top. Only at the bottom, far down, one could peep through a hole here and there. It meant stooping low, but that was no obstacle for Dora. Her heart simply longed to see and hear the children again. Never in her life had she known such a large family with such happy looking boys and girls. She had never seen such a crowd of children driving out alone in a coach. What fun this must be! Dora, squatting close to the ground, gazed expectantly through the opening, but not a sound could be heard. Twilight lay over the garden, and

the flowers sent out such a delicious fragrance that Dora could not get enough of it. How glorious it must be to be able to walk to and fro between those flower beds, and how delightful to sit under that tree laden with apples, under which stood a half hidden table! It looked white with various indistinct objects upon it. Dora was completely lost in contemplation of the charming sight before her when suddenly the merry voices could be heard, gaily chattering, and Dora was sure the children had returned. For awhile everything was still, as they had gone into the house. Now it grew noisy again and they all came out into the garden.

Mr. Birkenfeld had just returned from a long journey and his children had driven down to meet him at the steamboat-landing on the lake. The mother had made the last preparations for his reception during that time and arranged the festive banquet under

the apple-tree in the garden. As the father had been away several weeks, his return was a joyous occasion, to be duly celebrated. As soon as the carriage arrived, the mother came out to greet him. Then one child after another jumped out, followed by Philomele and Schnurri, who accompanied the performance with joyous barks. All climbed up the steps and went into the large living-room. Here the greetings grew so stormy that their father was left quite helpless in the midst of the many hands and voices that were crowding in upon him.

'Take turns, children! Wait! One after another or I can't really greet you," he called into the hubbub. "First comes the youngest, and then up according to age. Come here, little Hun! What have you to say to me?"

Herewith the father drew his youngest forward, a little boy about five years old, originally called Huldreich. As a baby,

when asked his name the little one had always called himself Hun and the name had stuck to him, remaining a great favorite with his brothers and sisters and all the other inmates of the house. Even father and mother called him Hun now. Jul,* the eldest son, had even made the statement that the small Hun's flat little nose most curiously reminded one of his Asiatic brothers. But the mother would never admit this.

This small boy had so much to tell his father that the latter had to turn from him long before he was done with his news.

"You can tell us more later on, small Hun. I must greet Willi and Lili now. Always merry and gay? And have you been very obedient while I was away?"

"Mostly," answered Willi with slight hesitation, while Lili, remembering their various deviations from the paths of right-

* Pronounced Yule in the original.

eousness, decided to change the subject of conversation and gaily embraced her father instead. Willi and Lili, the twins, were exactly eight years old and were so inseparable that nobody even spoke of them separately. They always played together and often undertook things which they had a clear glimmering that they should not do.

"And you, Rolf, how are you?" said the father, next, to a boy about twelve years old with a broad forehead and sturdy frame. "Are you working hard at your Latin and have you made up some nice riddles?"

"Yes, both, papa. But the others won't ever try to guess them. Their minds are so lazy and mamma never has time."

"That is too bad, and you, Paula?" continued the father, drawing to him his eldest daughter, who was nearly thirteen. "Are you still longing for a girl-friend, and do you still have to walk about the garden alone?"

"I haven't found anybody yet! But I am glad you are back again, papa," said the girl, embracing her father.

"I suppose you are spending your holidays in a useful fashion, Jul?" asked the father, shaking hands with his eldest.

"I try to combine my pleasure with something useful," replied Jul, returning his father's handshake. "The hazel nuts are ripe now, and I am watching over their harvest. I also ride young Castor every day so he won't get lazy."

Julius, who was seventeen years old, and studied at a high school of the nearest town, was home for his holidays just now. As he was very tall for his age, everybody called him "big Jul."

"I must ask you to continue your greetings in the garden, papa. All kinds of surprises await you there," began Jul again, coming up to his father, who was pleasantly greeting Miss Hanenwinkel, the children's

governess and teacher. But Jul had to pay dearly for this last remark. Immediately Willi and Lili flew at him from behind, enjoining him to silence by pinching and squeezing him violently. Fighting them off as best he could, he turned to Lili: "Let me go, little gad-fly. Just wait, I'll lead up to it better." And turning towards his father he said loudly, "I mean in the garden where mother has prepared all kinds of surprises you won't despise. We must celebrate by having something to eat, papa."

"I agree with you; how splendid! Perhaps we shall even find a table spread under my apple tree. I should call that a real surprise!" cried the father, delighted. "Come now!"

Giving the mother his arm, he went out, followed by the whole swarm. Lili and Willi were thrilled that their papa thought this was the only surprise in store for him.

Upon stepping outside, the parents stood

immediately under a triumphal arch; at both sides hung small red lanterns which lit up the large hanging board on which was a long inscription.

"Oh, oh," said the father, amazed, "a beautiful triumphal arch and a verse for my welcome. I must read it." And he read aloud:

"We all are here to welcome you beside the garden gate;
And since you've come we're happy now, we've had so long to wait.
We all are glad, as glad can be, our wishes have come true;
You've got back safe and we have made this arch to welcome you."

"Beautiful, beautiful! I suppose Rolf is the originator of this?" But Willi and Lili rushed forward crying, "Yes, yes, Rolf made it but we invented it. He made the poem and Jul set up the poles and we got the fir-twigs."

"I call this a wonderful reception, chil-

dren," cried the delighted father. "What lovely little red, blue and yellow lights you have put everywhere; the place looks like a magic garden! And now I must go to my apple tree."

The garden really looked like an enchanted place. Long ago the small colored lanterns had been made and Jul had fastened them that morning on all the trees and high bushes of the garden. While the greetings were taking place in the house old Battist and Trine had quickly lit them. The branches of the apple tree also were decorated with lights, making it look like a Christmas tree, with the apples gleaming out between the lanterns. They threw their light down on the table with its white cloth on which the mother had set the large roast, tempting the guests with the special wine for the occasion and the high pile of apple tarts.

"This is the nicest festival hall I can imag-

ine!" exclaimed the father happily, as he stood under the sparkling tree. "How wonderful our dinner will taste here! Oh, here is a second inscription."

Another white board hung down on two strings from the high branches behind the trees. On it was written:

"Happy all at my first are reckoned,
Christmas is in the state of my second,
And for my whole the feast is spread
With candy, nuts and gingerbread."

"Oh, I see, a riddle; Rolf must have made this for me!" said the father, kindly patting the boy's shoulder. "I'll set to work guessing as soon as we have settled down. Whoever guesses the riddle first may touch glasses with me before the others. Oh, how pleasant it is to be together again."

The family sat down under the tree and the conversation soon began to flow. From big Jul down to little Hun there seemed to

be no end of all the experiences everybody had to tell.

A sudden silence fell when the father pulled out from under his chair a large package, which he promptly began to unpack. The children watched his motions with suspense, knowing that a present for everybody would now come to light. First, came shining spurs for Jul, then a large blue book for Paula. Next emerged a rather curious object, turning out to be a large bow with a quiver and two feathered arrows, a present for Rolf. As the father took out the fine arrows with sharp iron points, he said with great emphasis:

"This weapon belongs to Rolf only, who knows how to use it. As it is no toy, Willi and Lili must never think of playing with it. Otherwise they might hurt somebody with it. It is dangerous, remember."

A gorgeous Noah's ark containing many

kinds of animals in pairs and a Noah's family was presented to the twins. The men all held big staffs and the women carried large umbrellas, much needed while going on board the ark. For little Hun, who came last, a wonderful nutcracker came to light, whose face seemed doomed to uninterrupted sorrow for all the tragedies of this world. His mouth stood wide open when not in action, but when screwed together he cracked nuts in the neatest fashion with his large, white teeth. The presents had to be shown properly and commented upon, and the admiration and joy knew no bounds.

Finally the mother resolutely got up to tell the children to go to bed. Their usual bedtime was long since past. As the father got up, he asked with a loud voice, "Yes, but who had guessed the riddle?"

No one had done so, as all except Rolf had completely forgotten it.

"But I guessed it," said the father, no other answer being heard. "I suppose it is *homecoming*. Isn't it, Rolf? Let me touch your glass now and also let me thank you for the riddle."

While Rolf joyfully stepped up to his father, several frightened voices cried out, "Fire, fire!" The next moment everyone leaped from their seats, Battist and Trine came running out with bottles and buckets from the kitchen, and Hans came from the stable with another bucket. All rushed about shrieking wildly, "The bush is on fire, the hedge is on fire." The confusion and noise was truly amazing.

"Dora, Dora!" a wailing voice called down to the little garden of the neighboring cottage and the next moment Dora hastened into the house from her place of observation. She had been so lost in everything she had partly seen and heard that she had not real-

ized that she had been squatting on the ground for two full hours. Upstairs the aunt in grief and fright had pulled her belongings from the wardrobes and drawers and had piled them high as for immediate flight.

"Aunt Ninette," said Dora timidly, conscious of having remained away too long. "Don't be frightened any more. Look, it is dark again in the garden over there and all the lights are out."

Upon gazing over the aunt saw that everything was dark and the last lights had been put out. Now a very dim lantern approached the apple tree. Probably somebody was setting things in order there.

"Oh, it is too terrible! Who could have guessed it!" moaned the aunt. "Go to bed now, Dora. We'll see tomorrow whether we shall move or leave the place entirely."

Dora quickly retired to her room but she could not go to sleep for a long, long while.

She saw before her the garden and the gleaming apple tree, heard the merry children's voices and also their father's pleasant, happy words. She could not help thinking of her own dear father who had always been willing to listen to her, and she realized how fortunate her little neighbors were. She had felt so drawn to the children and their kind parents that the thought of moving away from the house quite upset her. She could not go to sleep for a long, long while, for her mind was filled with the recent impressions. Finally her own beloved father seemed to be gazing down at her and saying the comforting words as he used to do:

"Yet God keeps watch above us
And doeth all things well."

These words were still in her mind as she went to sleep, while the lights, the gleaming tree and merry children across the way followed her into her dreams.

After the fire was put out, Willi and Lili were found to be the culprits. Thinking that Rolf's riddle would look more beautiful if made transparent from behind like the inscription used every Christmas behind their tree, "Glory to God on High," they had fetched two lights. Then standing on a high step which had been used for fastening the inscription, they held the lights very near the riddle. When no joyful surprise was shown on any of the faces, they put the lights still nearer, till at last the paper was set on fire, catching the nearby branches. They owned up to their unfortunate undertaking at once and in honor of the festive occasion were sent to bed with only mild reproof. Of course they were forbidden to make further experiments with fire.

Soon after deep quiet reigned in the house and peacefully the moon shone down over the sleeping garden and the splendid tall trees.

## CHAPTER IV

### ALL SIX

"We shall have to move away from here, Mrs. Kurd," were Aunt Ninette's first words the following morning when she came down to breakfast. "We seem to have come into a dreadful neighborhood. We had better move today."

Speechless with surprise, Mrs. Kurd stood still in the middle of the room. She looked at Mrs. Ehrenreich as if she could not comprehend the meaning of her words.

"I mean it seriously, Mrs. Kurd, we must move to-day," repeated Aunt Ninette.

"But you could not possibly find more delightful neighbors in all Tannenberg, Mrs. Ehrenreich, than we have here," began Mrs. Kurd as soon as she had recovered from her amazement.

"But, Mrs. Kurd, is it possible you did not hear the terrific noise last evening? It was worse than any of the things we especially meant to avoid."

"It was only the children, Mrs. Ehrenreich. They happened to be especially lively because they had a family party last evening."

"If such feasts are celebrated first by a wild explosion of joy, and end with a fire and an unspeakable confusion I call such a neighborhood not only noisy but dangerous. We had better move at once, Mrs. Kurd, at once."

"I don't believe the fire was intended to take place at the party," Mrs. Kurd reassured the aunt. "It was probably a little accident and was at once put out. Everything is most orderly in that household and I really cannot believe that the lady and gentleman can possibly want to move on account

of such neighbors as we have. You would be sure to repent such a decision, for no better rooms can be had in all Tannenberg."

Aunt Ninette calmed down a trifle and began breakfast with Dora and Uncle Titus.

Breakfast was over by that time in the big house and the father was attending to business while the mother was looking after her household duties. Rolf, who had a daily Latin lesson with a pastor of the neighboring parish, had long ago left the house. Paula was having a music lesson with Miss Hanenwinkel, while Willi and Lili were supposed to review their work for the coming lessons. Little Hun sat at his table in the corner, examining his sorrowful-looking nutcracker-man.

Now Big Jul, who had just returned from his morning ride, entered the room, his whip in his hand and the new spurs on his feet.

"Who'll take off my riding boots?" he

shouted, flinging himself into a chair and admiring his shiny spurs. Immediately Willi and Lili flew towards him, glad of a chance to leave their work.

With not the slightest hesitation Willi and Lili took hold and before Jul could prevent it, he was pulled off his chair, Willi and Lili having hold of him and not the boots. At the last instant he had been able to seize the chair, which, however, tumbled forward with him. Jul cried loudly, "Stop, stop!" which brought little Hun to his big brother's rescue. Holding the chair from the back, the small boy pushed with all his strength against the twins. But he was pulled forward, too, and found himself sliding along the floor as on an ice-slide. Willi and Lili, anxious to complete their task, kept up their efforts in utter disregard of Jul's insistent commands to stop and the words:

"O, Willi and Lili,
You twins, would you kill me?"

Little Hun shrieked loudly for assistance till at last the mother came upon the scene. Willi and Lili let go suddenly, Jul swung himself back to the chair, and little Hun, after swaying about for a few seconds, regained his balance.

"But, Jul, how can you make the little ones so wild? Can't you be doing something more profitable?" the mother admonished her eldest son.

"Yes, yes, I'll soon be at a more profitable occupation, dear mamma. But I feel as if I helped you with their education," he began in a conciliating tone. "If I keep Willi and Lili busy with innocent exercise like taking my boots off, I keep them out of mischief and any dreadful exploits of their own."

"You had better go to your profitable occupation, Jul. What nonsense you talk!" declared the mother. "And Lili, you go to the piano downstairs at once and practice till Miss Hanenwinkel has finished with

Paula. Till then Willi must study. I should call it a better thing, Jul, if you saw to the little ones in a sensible way till I come back."

Jul, quite willing, promised to do his best. Lili hastened to the piano, but being in a rather excited mood, she found her fingers stumbling over each other while doing scales. The little pieces therefore tempted her more and she gaily and loudly began to play:

"Rejoice, rejoice in life
While yet the lamp is glowing
And pluck the fragrant rose
In Maytime zephyrs blowing."

Uncle Titus and his wife had just finished breakfast when the riding-boot scene took place in the big house. Uncle Titus went straight to his room and barred the windows, while his wife called to the landlady, begging her to listen to the noise, herself. But the whole affair made a different impression on Mrs. Kurd than she had hoped.

"Oh, they have such gay times over there," said Mrs. Kurd, amused. When Mrs. Ehrenreich tried to explain to her that such a noise was not suitable for delicate people in need of rest, Mrs. Kurd suggested Mr. Ehrenreich's taking a little walk for recreation to the beautiful and peaceful woods in the neighborhood. The noise over there would not last very long. The young gentleman just happened to be home for the holidays and would not stay long. Lili's joyful piece, thrummed vigorously and sounding far from muffled, reached their ears now.

"What is that? Is that the young gentleman who is going away soon?" inquired Aunt Ninette excitedly. "What is coming next, I wonder? Some new noise and something more dreadful every moment. Is it possible, Mrs. Kurd, you have never heard it?"

"I never really noticed it very much. I

think the little one plays so nicely one can't help liking it," Mrs. Kurd declared.

"And where has Dora gone? She seems to be becoming corrupted already and I can't manage her any more," wailed the aunt again. "Dora, Dora, where are you? This is dreadful, for she must start on her work to-day."

Dora was at the hedge again, happily listening to the gay song Lili was drumming on the piano. She appeared as soon as her aunt called to her and a place was immediately chosen near the window, where she was to sew for the rest of the day.

"We can't possibly stay here," were the aunt's last words before leaving the room, and they nearly brought tears to Dora's eyes. The greatest wish of her heart was to stay just here where so many interesting things were going on and of which she could get a glimpse now and then. Through her opening

she could hear a great deal and could watch how the children amused themselves in their pretty garden. Dora puzzled hard to find a way which would prevent their moving. However, she could find none.

Meanwhile eleven o'clock had come and Rolf came rushing home. Seeing his mother through the open kitchen door, he ran to her.

"Mamma, mamma!" he cried before he was inside, "can you guess? My first makes——"

"Dear Rolf," the mother interrupted, "I beg you earnestly to look for somebody else; I have no time just now. Go to Paula. She is in the living room." Rolf obeyed.

"Paula!" he cried from below, "guess: My first makes——"

"Not now, please, Rolf!" retorted Paula. "I am looking for my note-book. I need it for making a French translation. Here comes Miss Hanenwinkel, try her. She can guess well."

Rolf threw himself upon the newcomer, Miss Hanenwinkel. "My first makes ——"

"No time, Rolf, no time," interrupted the governess. "Go to Mr. Jul. He is in the corner over there, having his nuts cracked for him. Go to him. See you again."

Miss Hanenwinkel, who had once been in Italy, had in that country acquired the habit usual there of taking leave of people, and used it now on all occasions. If, for instance, the knife-sharpener arrived, she would say, "You here again. Better stay where you belong! See you again." With that she quickly closed the door. If the governess were sent to meet peddlers, or travelling salesmen coming to the house on business, she would say, "You know quite well we need nothing. Better not come again. See you again," and the door was quickly shut. This was Miss Hanenwinkel's peculiarity.

Jul was sitting in a corner and in front of him sat little Hun, busy giving his sorrowful looking nutcracker nuts to crack, which he conscientiously divided with Jul.

Rolf stepped up to the pair. "You both have time to guess. Listen!

'My first is just an animal forlorn.
My second that to which we should be heir,
And with my whole some lucky few are born
While others win it if they fight despair.' "

"Yes, you are right. It is courage," explained the quick older brother.

"Oh, but you guessed that quickly!" said Rolf, surprised.

"It is my turn now, Rolf. Listen, for it needs a lot of thinking. I have made it up just this minute," and Jul declaimed:

'My first is sharp as any needle's end,
My second is the place where money grows,
My whole is used a pungent taste to lend,
And one you'd know, if only with your nose.' "

"That is hard," said Rolf, who needed time for thinking. "Just wait, Jul, I'll find it." Herewith Rolf sat down on a chair in order to think in comfort.

Big Jul and small Hun meanwhile kept on cracking and eating nuts, Jul varying the game by sometimes trying to hit some goal in the room with a shell.

"I know it!" cried Rolf, overjoyed. "It is pickpocket."

"Oh, ho, Rolf, how can you be so absurd! How can a pickpocket smell?" cried Jul, disgusted. "It is something very different. "It's spearmint."

"Yes, I see!" said Rolf, a little disappointed. "Wait, Jul, what is this?

'My first within the alphabet is found,
My second is a bread that's often sweet;
My third is something loved by active feet.
My whole means something more than just to go around.'"

"Cake-walk," said Jul with not the slightest hesitation.

"Oh ho, entirely wrong," laughed Rolf, "that doesn't work out. It has three syllables."

"Oh, I forgot," said Jul.

"You see you are wrong," triumphed Rolf. "It is abundance. Wait, I know still another."

"The first ——"

"No, I beg to be spared now, for it is too much of an exertion, and besides I must see to Castor." Jul had jumped up and was running to the stable.

"Oh, what a shame, what a shame!" sighed Rolf. "Nobody will listen to me any more and I made up four more nice riddles. You can't guess, Hun, you are too foolish."

"Yes, I can!" declared the little boy, offended.

"All right, try then; but listen well and

leave these things for a while. You can crack nuts later on," urged Rolf and began:

"My first is closest bonds that can two unite,
My second like the shining sun is bright;
My whole's a flower that thrives best in wet ground
And like my second in its color found."

"A nutcracker," said little Hun at once. Jul being the little one's admired model, he thought that to have something to say at once was the chief point of the game.

"I'll never bother with you again, Hun; there is nothing to be done with you," cried Rolf, anxious to run away. But that did not work so simply, little Hun, who had caught the riddle fever, insisted upon trying out his first attempt.

"Wait, Rolf, wait!" he cried, holding on to Rolf's jacket. "It is my turn now and you must guess. My first can be eaten, but you can't drink it——"

"I suppose it's going to be nutcracker!" cried Rolf, running away from such a stupid riddle as fast as his legs could carry him. But the small boy ran after him, crying all the time, "You didn't guess it! You didn't guess it! Guess it, Rolf, guess!"

All at once Willi and Lili came racing towards him from the other side, crying loudly, "Rolf, Rolf, a riddle, guess it! Look at it, you must guess it!" and Lili held a piece of paper directly under Rolf's nose, while Hun kept on crying, "Guess, Rolf, guess!" The inventor of riddles was now in an extremity himself.

"Give me a chance and I'll guess it," he cried, waving his arms to fight them off.

"As you can't guess mine, I'll go to Jul," said Hun disdainfully, turning his back.

Rolf seized the small slip of paper, yellow from age, which Lili was showing him. He

looked perplexed at the following puzzling words written apparently by a child's hand:

"My hand.
Lay firmly
Wanted to be
But otherwise
One stays
And each
And now will
This leaf
When the time comes
That the pieces
fit
We'll rejoice
And we'll go
Never."

"Perhaps this is a Rebus," said Rolf thoughtfully. "I'll guess it if you leave me alone a minute. But I must think hard."

There was not time for that just then, for the dinner bell rang loudly and the family began to gather around the large dining-room table.

"What did you do this morning, little

Hun?" asked the father, as soon as everybody had settled down to eating.

"I made a riddle, papa, but Rolf won't guess my riddles, and I can't ever find Jul. The others are no good, either."

"Yes, papa," eagerly interposed Rolf now, "I made four or five lovely riddles but no one has time to guess except those who have no brains. When Jul has guessed one he is exhausted. That is so disappointing because I usually have at least six new ones for him every day."

"Yes, papa," Willi and Lili joined in simultaneously, "and we found a very difficult puzzle. It is even too hard for Rolf to guess. We think it is a Rebus."

"If you give me time, I'll guess it," declared Rolf.

"The whole house seems to be teeming with riddles," said the father, "and the riddle fever has taken possession of us all. We

ought to employ a person for the sole purpose of guessing riddles."

"Yes, if only I could find such a person," sighed Rolf. To make riddles for some one who would really listen and solve them intelligently seemed to him the most desirable thing on earth.

After lunch the whole family, including Miss Hanenwinkel, went outside to sit in a circle under the apple tree, the women and girls with some sewing or knitting. Even little Hun held a rather doubtful looking piece of material in his hand into which he planted large stitches with some crimson thread. It was to be a present for Jul in the shape of a cover for his horse. Jul, according to his mother's wish, had brought out a book from which he was supposed to read aloud. Rolf sat under the mountain-ash some distance away, studying Latin. Willi, who was expected to learn some verses by

heart, sat beside him. The small boy gazed in turn at the birds on the branches overhead, at the workmen in the field below, and at the tempting red apples. Willi preferred visible objects to invisible ones and found it difficult to get anything into his head. It was a great exertion even to try, and he generally accomplished it only with Lili's help. His study-hour in the afternoon, therefore, consisted mostly in contemplating the landscape round about.

Jul that day seemed to prefer similar observations to reading aloud. He had not even opened his book yet, and after letting his glances roam far and wide, they always came back to his sister Paula.

"Paula," he said now, "you have a face today as if you were a living collection of worries and annoyances."

"Why don't you read aloud, Jul, instead of making comparisons nobody can understand?" retorted Paula.

"Why don't you begin, Jul?" said the mother. "But, Paula, I can't help wondering, either, why you have been in such a wretched humor lately. What makes you so reserved and out of sorts?"

"I should like to know why I should be confiding, when there is no one to confide in. I have not a single girl friend in Tannenberg, and nobody at all to talk to."

The mother advised Paula to spend more time either with her small sister or Miss Hanenwinkel, who was only twenty years old and a very nice companion for her. But Paula declared that the first was by far too young and the other much too old, for twenty seemed a great age to Paula. For a real friendship people must be the same age, must feel and think the same. They must at once be attractive to each other and hate the thought of ever being separated. Unless one had such a friend to share one's

joys and experiences, nothing could give one pleasure and life was very dull.

"Paula evidently belongs to the romantic age," said Jul seriously. "I am sure she expects every little girl who sells strawberries to produce a flag and turn into a Joan of Arc, and every field laborer to be some banished king looking for his lost kingdom among the furrows."

"Don't be so sarcastic, Jul," his mother reproved. "The sort of friendship Paula is looking for is a beautiful thing. I experienced it myself, and the memories connected with mine are the sweetest of my whole life."

"Tell us about your best friend, mamma," begged Paula, who several times already had heard her mother speak of this friendship which had become a sort of ideal for her. Lili wanted to hear about it, too. She knew nothing except that she recalled the name of her mother's friend.

"Didn't you call me after your friend's name, mamma?" asked the little girl, and her mother assured her this was so.

"You all know the large factory at the foot of the mountain and the lovely house beside it with the big shady garden," began the mother. "That's where Lili lived, and I remember so vividly seeing her for the first time.

"I was about six years old and was playing in the rectory garden with my simple little dolls. They were sitting around on flat stones, for I did not have elaborate rooms for them furnished with chairs and sofas like you. Your grandfather, as you know, was rector in Tannenberg and we lived extremely simply. Several children from the neighborhood, my playmates, stood around me watching without a single word. This was their way, and as they hardly ever showed any interest in anything

I did and usually just stared at everything I brought out, they annoyed me very much. It didn't matter what I brought out to play with, they never joined in my games. That evening as I knelt on the ground setting my dolls around a circle, a lady came into the garden and asked for my father. Before I could answer, a child who had come with the lady ran up to me and, squatting on the ground, began to examine all my dolls. Behind each flat stone I had stuck up another so the dolls could lean against it. This pleased her so much that she at once began to play with the dolls and made them act. She was so lively that she kept me spellbound and I watched her gaily bobbing curls and wondered at her pretty language, forgetting everything for the moment except what she was doing with my dolls. Finally the lady had to ask for my father again. From that day on Lili and I were

inseparable friends, and an ideal existence began for me at Lili's house. I shall never forget the blissful days I spent with her in her beautiful home where her lovely mother and excellent father showed me as much affection as if I were their own child. Lili's parents had come from the North. Her father, through some agents, had bought the factory and expected to settle here for life. Lili was their only child, and as we were so congenial, we wished to be together all the time. Whenever we were separated we longed for each other again and it seemed quite impossible for us to live apart.

"Lili's parents were extremely kind and often begged my parents as an especial favor to let me stay with Lili for long visits, which seemed like regular long feasts to me. I had never seen such wonderful toys as Lili had, and some I shall never forget as long as I live. Some were little figures which we

played with for whole days. Each had a large family with many members, of which everyone had a special name and character. We lived through many experiences with them which filled us with joy and sorrow. I always returned home to the rectory laden with gifts and soon after I was invited again. Later we had our lessons together, sometimes from the school teacher, Mr. Kurd, and sometimes from my father. We began to read together and shared our heroes and heroines, whose experiences thrilled us so much that we lived them all through ourselves. Lili had great fire and temperament, and it was a constant joy to be with her. Her merry eyes sparkled and her curls were always flying. We lived in this happy companionship, perfectly unconscious that our blissful life could ever change. But just before we were twelve years old my father said one day that Mr.

Blank was going to leave the factory and return home. These words were such a blow that I could hardly comprehend them at first. They made such an impression on me that I remember the exact spot where my father told me. All I could understand was that Mr. Blank had been misinformed about the business in the beginning and was obliged to give it up after a severe loss. My father was much grieved and said that a great wrong had been done to Lili's father by his dishonest agents. He had lost his whole fortune as a result.

"I was quite crushed by the thought of losing Lili and by her changed circumstances besides. It made me so unhappy that I remember being melancholy for a long, long time after. The following day Lili came to say good-bye, and we both cried bitterly, quite sure of not being able to endure the grief of our separation. We

swore eternal friendship to each other and decided to do everything in our power to meet as often as possible. Finally we sat down to compose a poem together, something we had frequently done before. We cut the verses through in the middle—we had written it for that purpose—and each took a half. We promised to keep this half as a firm bond and if we met again, to join it together as a sign of our friendship.

"Lili left and we wrote to each other with great diligence and warm affection for many years. These letters proved the only consolation to me in my lonely, monotonous life in the country. When we were young girls of about sixteen or seventeen, Lili wrote to me that her father had decided to emigrate to America. She promised to write to me as soon as they got settled there, but from then on I never heard another word. Whether the letters were lost or Lili

did not write because her family did not settle definitely anywhere, I cannot say. Possibly she thought our lives had drifted too far apart to keep up our intercourse. Perhaps Lili is dead. She may have died soon after her last letter—all this is possible. I mourned long years for my unforgettable and dearest friend to whom I owed so much. All my inquiries and my attempts to trace her were in vain. I never found out anything about her."

The mother was silent and a sad expression had spread over her features, while the children also were quite depressed by the melancholy end of the story. One after the other said, sighing, "Oh, what a shame, what a shame!" But little Hun, who had listened most attentively, had drawn tenderly near his mother and said comfortingly, "Don't be sad, mamma! As soon as I am big I'll go to America and fetch Lili home to you."

Rolf and Willi had also joined the other listeners, and after thoughtfully gazing at a slip of paper in his hand Rolf asked, "Mamma, did the poem you cut apart look like a Rebus, written on a narrow paper?"

"Perhaps, Rolf. It might have given that impression," replied the mother. "Why do you ask?"

"Look, mamma," said Rolf, holding out the yellowish slip of paper, "don't you think this might be your half?"

"Rolf, it really is," cried the mother, agitated. "I thought I had lost it for good, for after keeping it many years I suddenly could not find it. I have never really thought about it till I told you about this friendship. Where did you find this dear token, Rolf?"

"We found it!" cried Willi and Lili simultaneously. "We found it in the old family Bible. We wanted to see if

Eve's face was still scratched up," the twins continued, taking turns giving their information.

"Oh, yes, that brings back another memory of Lili," said the mother with a smile. "She did this one day as we were both imagining how beautiful it would be to be in paradise. She suddenly grew so furious at Eve for having eaten the apple that she scratched her face in the picture with a pencil for punishment. But my old poem! I am afraid I can't puzzle it out any more," said the mother after trying to study the broken sentences. It is so dreadfully long ago. Just think, children, over thirty years!" The mother laid the paper, carefully folded, in her workbasket and asked the children to pick up their things and follow her, as it would soon be time for supper. As they knew well that their papa was always punctual, they quickly packed up

their things and one after the other disappeared into the house through the triumphal arch, which had been left standing.

Dora had been watching the quiet group under the apple tree for quite a while through the hole in the hedge. As everybody got up and slowly went away, she had the chance to examine one child after another. When they were all gone, Dora heaved a deep sigh and said to herself, "If only I could be allowed to go over there just once."

At supper Aunt Ninette said, "At last we have had a few quiet hours! What a relief! If this keeps on we might possibly remain here. What do you think, dear Titus?"

Dora waited anxiously for her uncle's answer.

"The air is very heavy in these rooms and I feel even more dizzy than I did in Karlsruhe," declared the uncle.

Dora dropped her eyes to her plate and her appetite was gone.

The aunt broke out into loud wails now. Should the whole journey and their stay here prove absolutely useless after all? Should they have moved the very first day? She found consolation at last in the thought that the family opposite had quieted down, and that the windows could be opened by tomorrow. Dora clung to this hope, for as long as she lived so near, a possibility remained that she might go and play, at least a single time, with the children in their fragrant garden.

## CHAPTER V

### BEFORE AND AFTER THE DELUGE

IT HAPPENED quite often that nobody had time to play with little Hun and he himself found nothing on earth to do. At such times he would wander aimlessly all through the house, bothering everyone at their work. His mother always sent him to his little table and wanted him to keep busy there. The boy would then be very unhappy and troublesome. He often chose the most inconvenient moments for these restless moods, when everybody was especially busy.

The day following the events just related was a Saturday, when the house was being cleaned and the furniture blocked all the hallways. Hun wandered about among the chairs and sofas and seemed in just as unsettled a state as was the house.

After looking for his mother everywhere, he succeeded in finding her on the top floor of the house, sorting the clean laundry, but she sent him downstairs again with the words, "I am very busy now, Hun. Go and look for Paula; she may have time for you." He found Paula at the piano.

"Go away, Hun! I have to practise and can't guess your stupid charades," she said to her little brother, who had caught the fatal fever from Rolf. He was most anxious to say his own charade about the nutcracker and was terribly disappointed not to have the chance. "Here's Miss Hanenwinkel, go to her," said Paula.

"Miss Hanenwinkel, my first one cannot drink, but eat," the little one cried as soon as he saw the governess.

"No, Hun, please spare me," the governess hurriedly interrupted him. "I do not know what will happen if you begin it,

too. I have no time. Look, Mr. Jul is just getting down from his horse over there; go to him."

The little one wandered off.

"Jul, nobody wants to guess my riddles, Miss Hanenwinkel least of all," he complained to his big brother. "She said you ought to do it."

"Did she say so? All right, then, say it," Jul encouraged him.

"My first you can't drink, but eat," began Hun, and stopped.

"All right, keep on, Hun!"

"You have to make the rest, Jul; but the whole must be nutcracker," said the little boy.

"I can see that quite clearly; but because Miss Hanenwinkel has sent me a riddle to guess through you I'll send her one, too. Come, I'll say it and you must learn it by heart. Then you can go and ask Miss Hanenwinkel to solve it for you."

Standing the little one in front of him, Jul said several times quite slowly:

"When like my first Hun's crow, disturbs all men
Into the second does the whole put then
The naughty culprit, saying, 'See you again.'" *

Before very long the small boy had memorized the lines and eagerly ran off to serve them up to the governess.

The latter sat in the school-room, trying to explain a problem in arithmetic to the twins. This proved a hard task today. The two were dreadfully absent-minded. Just then Hun came into the room.

"A charade, Miss Hanenwinkel," he announced at once.

"But I won't let you say it now. This is no time for such nonsense," said the governess firmly. But as Jul was the originator this time the little boy grew quite audacious. Without swerving he declared several times:

* Hanenwinkel translated into English means Rooster-corner.

"It's Jul's charade, Jul made it up."

"Then say it quickly," said the governess, visibly relenting. The boy distinctly recited his riddle.

Miss Hanenwinkel, who came from Bremen, did not like to be left behind and was always quick in replies. Immediately sitting down at the table she took up pen and paper and wrote:

"My first's the time for nuts, my whole then finds
Much pleasure in them, for at once he grinds
Them up between his teeth; but we can't see,
That there's much of my second in this. For he
My whole, that is, throws shells upon the floor
And makes us tumble on them at the door."

"Take this to Mr. Jul," she said, giving the little one the paper, "and tell him I refuse to be beaten. As long as he has turned my name so nicely into a charade, I am sending him one, too. But don't come in again, Hun. We must work hard, and another disturbance might be fatal."

Willi and Lili were less afraid of a disturbance and it was quite visible that the recent interruption had already had the dreaded effect. While the governess had been talking to their brother, the twins had moved their heads closer and closer together, apparently deep in making plans. These had proved so absorbing that they could not even remember the simplest sums, and Miss Hanenwinkel found herself obliged to shut her book with a deep sigh. She remarked in conclusion that if each number represented some foolish exploit, Willi and Lili would grasp them all. This opinion of the governess was not without foundation, because the twins seemed especially gifted for such exploits. Apparently a scheme of this kind was in their heads now, and as soon as the lesson was done they rushed enterprisingly towards the laundry. Here they had a secret consultation opposite all the wash-tubs in the place.

At table Jul pulled out a sheet of paper and asked, "Who can guess a fine riddle Miss Hanenwinkel has composed?" after which he read it.

He was hardly finished when Rolf cried out the answer, "Julius and by rights Yule-use."

It was the right solution. Miss Hanenwinkel, however, did not read her riddle, because she did not wish to have her peculiarity discussed and laughed at.

After dinner Willi and Lili ran to the laundry again, for it was Saturday afternoon and they were free to do what they pleased. Miss Hanenwinkel had meant to watch the children, but seeing them enter the laundry she supposed they were going to wash some doll's clothing, a favorite occupation of theirs. She was glad they had found something to keep them busy for at least a couple of hours.

But Willi and Lili had an idea which reached far beyond a mere doll wash. While playing with their new Noah's ark they had entered so deeply into the miraculous existence of the people and animals in the ark that Lili conceived the brilliant idea of executing a trip in the ark themselves. She carefully thought out everything necessary for such a journey, and being alert and practical, she knew quite well how to do it.

Among the washtubs the twins selected one of medium size for the ark, one just big enough to hold them and the animals if everybody kept nice and quiet.

Schnurri and Philomele were to represent the animals in the ark, and the first thing the children did was catch hold of the two pets so necessary to their idea. Schnurri followed the call with a growl, while Philomele rubbed her soft fur against Lili's legs so caressingly that the little girl picked her

up tenderly saying, "You really are much nicer than Schnurri, dear Philomele."

Philomele had gotten her name because she mewed very melodiously, and Schnurri his because he grunted and growled so much. But there was a cause for this. The two had been commanded to live in harmony together and to do each other no harm. Schnurri punctually obeyed these instructions by always being peaceful and considerate towards Philomele. While they were having dinner from the same dish, he ate very slowly, knowing that the cat with her tiny mouth could not eat as fast as he. Philomele was always pleasant towards the dog when anyone was watching, but when nobody was around she frequently lifted her paw and gave him a treacherous blow behind the ear. This would make Schnurri growl, and as this happened very often, he growled nearly all the time. He

had gotten his name unjustly, because he was by nature a peace-loving and friendly creature.

For the trip in the ark some water was necessary. Lili knew that on wash days a long wooden funnel or pipe was laid under the fountain outside and into the tub, which made the latter fill with water. She had planned to let the water flow from the wooden funnel to the floor of the laundry where the washtub always stood. In that way the floor would be gradually covered with water and finally the tub would be lifted up, representing the swimming ark. All this was carefully planned, and only the long funnel which was necessary for that manoeuvre had to be secured.

Willi and Lili could not quite decide whether it was wiser to ask Battist or Trine for help.

Old Battist and young Trine stood in

practically the same relationship as Schnurri and Philomele. Battist had served many years in the household, and knowing about everything, had a word to say about all the management of the house and stable, as well as the garden and the fields. The universal respect shown to the old man annoyed Trine, who felt that regard was due to her, too. If she had not served the family very long yet, her aunt had lived in the Birkenfeld household so many years that she had actually become too old to work and was resting from her labors now. Trine had taken her place and was decidedly jealous of old Battist's authority, which she herself did not recognize at all. She behaved very decently to the old man before the family, but teased him as soon as they turned their backs, just as Philomele did with Schnurri.

The children knew this and often made use of this state of affairs for their own pri-

vate ends. Willi and Lili felt that Trine would be more willing to lend them aid than the old gardener, who never much approved of extraordinary schemes. But the needed funnel came under his especial sceptre, and therefore Lili decided to ask the old man's assistance, while Willi held on to Schnurri and the cat. Finding Battist on the threshing-floor sorting out seeds, Lili stood herself in front of him with her hands back of her, taking the identical attitude her father always took when talking with his workmen.

"Battist," she began energetically, "where is the funnel which is used in the laundry for filling the washtubs with water?"

Battist looked at Lili from his seeds, as if anxious to weigh her question. Then he asked deliberately, "Did your mama send you here?"

"No, she didn't send me, I want it myself," explained Lili.

"I see; then I don't know where the funnel is," retorted Battist.

"But Battist," Lili commenced again, "I only want a little water from the spring fountain. Why can't I have it?"

"I know you two small birds," growled Battist. "Once a little bit of fire and then a little bit of water, and finally some dreadful mishap. You can't have it this time, you can't have it."

"Then I don't care," sulked Lili, and went at once to the kitchen where Trine was sweeping the floor.

"Trine," said the little girl pleasantly, "won't you come and give us the funnel for the fountain? Battist is horrid, he won't even give it to us for a second. But you will let us have it, won't you, Trine?"

"Of course," replied Trine. "I don't see why you shouldn't have a little bit of water. But you'll have to wait until the old bear goes away. Then I'll go with you."

After a while Trine saw Battist walking across the yard towards the fields.

"Come, now," she said, taking Lili's hand in hers and running to the laundry. She pulled out the pipe from its hiding place, laid one end under the spigot and the other into a small tub. Then she explained to Lili how to take the pipe away when the bucket was full enough. She and Willi could do this quite well themselves and when they needed more water they could put it back. Trine had to go back to her work now.

When the maid left, they were ready to start on their excursion. After the pipe was laid on the floor, Lili climbed in, followed by Willi, and Philomele was lifted and Schnurri was pulled inside. Noah and his wife sat in their beautiful ark now, grateful over their delivery and joyful over their trip on the rising floods. The water from the fountain was steadily flowing into the

laundry and all of a sudden the ark was lifted and began to float. Noah and his wife screamed with delight. They had really succeeded in their plans, the ark actually swam about on real waves.

Several high stone steps led down into the laundry, and it therefore held a large quantity of water. The water rose steadily higher and higher, and the children began to feel a little frightened.

"Look, Willi, we won't be able to get out any more," said Lili, "it's getting higher all the time."

Willi looked out thoughtfully over the edge of the tub and said, "If it gets much higher, we'll have to drown."

Of course it kept on getting higher and higher.

Schnurri was beginning to get restless, too, and by jumping about threatened to upset the washtub. It rocked violently to

and fro. The water by that time was so deep that the children could not possibly climb out again, and seized by a sudden panic they began to shriek with all their might: "We are drowning, we are drowning! Mamma! Mamma! Battist! Trine! We are drowning!" Finally instead of words they just frantically screeched and yelled. Schnurri barked and growled from sympathy, while Philomele revealed her true character and began to bite and scratch, while meowing loudly. Philomele refused to go into the water, neither would she stay in the tub. Instead she went on crazily and scratched the children whenever she could. But when the faithful Schnurri saw that no assistance was coming in answer to their cries, he jumped into the water with a big leap. He swam towards the door, gave himself a shake and ran away. But the children yelled worse than ever now, for Schnurri had nearly upset the tub in jumping out.

Dora had long ago run down to her hole in the hedge to see what was the cause of the pitiful cries.

The laundry stood close to the hedge, but she could see nothing but a funnel through which water flowed into the laundry. But she heard their cries about drowning and turning about she ran upstairs again. "Aunt Ninette," she cried breathlessly, "two children are drowning over there. Don't you hear them, don't you hear them?"

The aunt had heard the yells, despite her tightly barred windows.

"Oh, gracious, what does it mean?" cried the affrighted aunt. " Of course I heard the awful noise, but who is drowning, I wonder? Mrs. Kurd! Mrs. Kurd! Mrs. Kurd!"

Meanwhile the soaked dog ran in big leaps towards the coachhouse, where Battist was cutting bean-poles. Schnurri rushed up to him, pulled his trousers, barked violently,

then tried to pull Battist along again, howling incessantly.

"Something is up," said Battist, and putting one of the poles on his shoulder, he said to himself, "One can never tell what may be useful." Herewith he followed Schnurri, who gaily preceded him to the washhouse. By that time the mother, the governess, Paula, Rolf and Hun, and at last Trine had assembled, as the awful noise had penetrated into every nook and corner of the house and garden. Battist at once held his long pole out over the floods towards the tub.

"Take hold of it tight and don't let it go!" he called to the children, and after drawing the whole ark towards him, he lifted the inmates onto dry land. Willi and Lili were so scared and white that they had to recover a little before being examined about their exploit. Taking each by the hand, their mother led them to the bench under the

apple tree and gave them a chance to revive a little. Jul, leading the small Hun by the hand, followed and said, "Oh, you terrible twins, some day you will both come to a terrible end."

With trousers turned up, old Battist had stepped into the deluge and had opened all the vents for draining to let the floods disperse. To Trine, who stood beside him, he said pityingly, "It only happened because you have no more sense than the seven-year-olds!" He knew quite well who had fetched the funnel. Trine, realizing that she had been duped, could give no answer, but like Philomele, got ready to scratch her adversary.

When everybody sat safe and sound again under the apple tree, Philomele came up to Lili, tenderly meowing and rubbing against the girl's legs. But the child pushed her away and instead she and Willi tenderly

stroked the wet Schnurri, who lay at their feet on the ground. The twins secretly resolved to give Schnurri their whole supper that night, for in their great extremity they had found out the true character of their pets.

After thoughtfully gazing at the rescued twins for a while, the small Hun joined Jul, who was wandering to and fro on the gravel path.

"Jul," said the little one solemnly, "tell me in what way the terrible twins could come to a fearful end?"

"They might do it in different ways, Hun," replied Jul, standing still. "You see they have already tried fire and water. In some excited mood they may next pull down the house over our heads. Then we'll all be lying underneath and everything will be over."

"Can't we quickly jump away?" asked little Hun, concerned.

"We can if they don't do it in the middle of the night."

"Please wake me up then," Hun implored his brother.

Mrs. Kurd had come in answer to Aunt Ninette's repeated cries at the identical moment when Battist was pulling the ark to safety and the cries had stopped.

"Did you hear it, Mrs. Kurd? Wasn't it terrible? But everything is quiet now. Do you suppose they were saved?"

"Of course," said Mrs. Kurd calmly. "The little ones were just screaming a little and there can't have been any real danger."

"I never heard such shrieks and I am still trembling in all my limbs. Oh, I wonder how your uncle stood it, Dora. This is the end, I fear, Mrs. Kurd, and we have had enough. Nothing can keep us from moving now."

With this Aunt Ninette stepped into her

husband's room to see how he had taken the last disturbance. Mr. Titus did not even hear his wife's entrance, for he had stuffed cotton into his ears when the noise penetrated even through the closed windows. Afterwards he calmly kept on writing.

"For goodness' sake, Titus! That is dreadfully unhealthy and heats your head," wailed his wife, upon noticing her husband's ears. Quickly taking out the cotton, she told him what she had resolved to do. Tomorrow after the morning service she was going to pay a call on the village rector and ask his advice about another lodging. After what had happened they could not stay. It was too much to put up with.

Mr. Titus agreed to everything she said and Aunt Ninette went to her room to enlarge further upon the scheme.

Dora stood in the corridor listening to her.

"Are we really going away, Aunt

Ninette?" she asked timidly, as soon as her uncle's door was shut.

"Surely!" the woman answered, "we expect to leave the house on Monday."

Dora slipped into her little room and sat down on her bed. She was completely cast down by the thought of leaving without having even once met the children in the lovely garden. She thought how dreary it would be to go back to Karlsruhe, where she would have to sew shirts again and could no longer watch the merry life of the jolly children. From sheer grief Dora's eyes were so cast down that she could not see her five bright stars gleaming down to her. They seemed to be calling, "Dora, Dora! Have you forgotten your father's words completely?"

## CHAPTER VI

### A TERRIBLE DEED

THE weather Sunday was very fair and the garden lay peaceful and quiet in the sunlight. Nothing could be heard except the occasional thump of a falling apple, which had begun to ripen. The parents had gone to church with Paula and Miss Hanenwinkel and Jul and Hun sat peacefully before a great bowl of hazelnuts, discussing the different ways in which the nutcracker could open nuts. Willi and Lili, after the instructive experience of the day before, had come back to their ark with the wooden men and ladies and sat in the schoolroom where they were allowed to spread their toys over the large table. Rolf had run to a lonely little summerhouse in a distant corner of the garden in order to be undisturbed at different studies he was interested in.

When the deluge, which had to proceed this time without any water, had lasted a long time, and the dove had returned with the olive branch, Lili grew tired of the game and cast about for something new.

"Come down stairs, Willi," she proposed. "Let's look at Rolf's bow and arrow. He put it in the hall yesterday."

Willi, quite ready for a change of occupation, hastened downstairs after his twin sister, who knew the exact spot where Rolf had put the bow and the quiver full of feathered arrows.

"It must be great fun to shoot with it," said Lili. "I watched Rolf doing it. You pull the string back and lay the arrow on it; then you let go of the string and the arrow flies away. Let's try it, Willi."

"But we are not allowed to do it. Don't you remember papa saying we mustn't?" answered Willi.

"I don't actually mean to shoot. We'll just try a little how it works," suggested Lili.

This tempted Willi very much.

"But where shall we try it? There is too little room in the hall," he said.

"Of course not here; I know a good place for it in the garden," she cried, running out with the arrow towards an open space near the hedge. Willi eagerly followed with the bow.

"Here is a good place," said Lili, "let's both try it together."

Willi stuck the bow into the ground and both pulled the string back as hard as they could. When they succeeded in tightening the string Lili jubilated loudly.

"Now lift up the bow," she directed her brother, "put on the arrow like that and pull this thing here back. You'll see what fun it is! Try it, Willi."

The boy pulled hard and the arrow went

whirring through the hedge. That same moment they heard a cry of pain in the little garden beyond. Then everything was still.

The children looked at each other perplexed.

"Do you think it was a little rabbit that made the noise?" asked Willi, frightened.

"Do you think it was a chicken?" asked Lili with a very bad conscience. Both hoped sincerely they had heard wrongly when it sounded like a child's cry, and that they had only hurt a little animal. They knew they had been very disobedient in handling the weapon, and without saying a word they carried the bow back to its place. Here a new dread took hold of them. What would happen if Rolf discovered an arrow was missing? Just then they heard the others coming back from church. This prevented them from going out and hunting for the missing arrow, which would give them away

at once. Rolf, of course, would not know they had shot, but he might ask them. They felt very helpless and entangled by their disobedience. Besides, it seemed quite impossible ever to admit the truth if somebody asked them for the arrow.

In silence and greatly oppressed by a feeling of guilt, Willi and Lili slipped back to the schoolroom and remained there without making a sound till they were called to dinner. They sat down quietly on their chairs without any joyful expectation of the coming meal. They never raised their eyes and swallowed hard at their soup as if it contained large gravel stones. Whenever the father accosted them, they did not raise their eyes, and their answers were scarcely audible.

"What is the matter again with those two?" the father asked, quite convinced that their contrition was not due to the incident

of the day before: the repentance of the twins never lasted so long as that. He received no answer, as they sat motionless, staring at their plates. The mother anxiously shook her head, while Hun, who guessed at once that something dreadful must have happened, kept a watchful eye on the pair.

The fine pudding with the wine sauce appeared and each got a nice big helping. Suddenly the father jumped up from his seat. "What is the matter? Can someone over there be ill? I just saw the doctor running in there rapidly as if someone were in great danger."

"I know of no sick people," said the mother. "Mrs. Kurd has rented her rooms to strangers. Perhaps one of them is ill."

First the twins blushed scarlet, then they grew white from fear as an inner voice repeated to them insistently: "Now you'll

be found out, now you'll be found out!" They were so petrified that they could not move their limbs and found themselves obliged to leave the tempting pudding with the raisins untouched. Even Hun, known as the most indefatigable eater of puddings, left his portion behind, for suddenly leaping from his seat he cried in terrible agitation, "Mamma, papa, come! Everything will fall to pieces now!" and nearly pulling Jul bodily from his chair he flew towards the door. He could still be heard shrieking insanely outside, "Come, come! Everything will go to pieces. Jul told me so."

"What evil spirit has come into the children!" inquired the father, amazed. "The twins are acting as if they were screwed to a torture bench and Hun has completely lost his senses."

Suddenly realizing what had caused Hun's panic, Jul burst into a gale of laugh-

ter. The small boy, seeing the twins so frightened and grim themselves, felt sure the pair had begun their fearful work of destruction. In a few moments the house would crash down over the assembled family, he was quite sure. Under renewed outbursts of laughter Jul explained what Hun's insane cries signified and even the mother was quite unable to tempt the boy into the room again with soothing words. He danced up and down before the house and violently implored everybody to come outside. At last his father ordered the door to be shut, so the meal could proceed in quiet. Afterwards when the family went into the garden, little Hun approached as soon as he saw them all in safety under the apple tree. Then he said, sighing, "If only somebody would fetch me out my pudding before the house falls down!"

The mother drew the little boy up to her

and explained how very foolish both Jul and he had been, the big boy to invent such nonsense, and the other to believe it. She told him to think a little and see how impossible it would be for two small people like Willi and Lili to tear down a large house built of stone; but it took quite a while to remove the fixed idea from the boy's brain.

Dora had been standing at the hedge waiting for the children to come to the garden when the twins approached. She watched their sport with much suspense, and then the arrow happened to fly straight into her bare arm. The pain was so great that she moaned aloud. Fortunately the arrow had not penetrated far enough to remain fixed in her flesh, and had fallen down at once. But such streams of blood poured from her arm over her hand and dress that Dora, in her fright, forgot her suffering. She could not help thinking how terribly

Aunt Ninette would worry at her accident. In her anxiety she sought for some means to conceal the matter and pulling out her handkerchief she wrapped it firmly round the wound. Next she ran to the fountain in front of the house and began to wash off the stains. But the blood immediately soaked through the bandage, and Dora was stained with blood.

That moment her aunt called her name from upstairs and Dora had to go. Trembling, she went reluctantly upstairs to her aunt, holding her bandaged arm stretched out in front, because the blood was simply dripping from it. The light Sunday frock was spotted with blood, and streaks were on the child's cheeks and forehead, because in trying to wipe it off Dora had soiled herself everywhere.

"For mercy's sake!" shrieked the aunt at this appalling sight. "Dora, what is the

matter with you? Tell me! Did you fall? How dreadful you look! Your cheeks look as white as chalk under the bloodstains! Dora, for heaven's sake, speak!"

Dora had several times been on the point of speaking, but had not got the chance. She answered timidly at last: "It was an arrow."

A storm of worse complaints than Dora had ever heard broke forth now. Wringing her hands and running up and down the room the aunt exclaimed, "An arrow, an arrow! You were shot! And in the arm! You'll be lame for life now! Your arm will stay stiff and you'll be a cripple forever! You won't be able to sew any more, no, you won't be able to do anything at all! You will have to live in poverty the rest of your life! We'll all suffer most dreadfully! How could such a misfortune break in upon us? How can we go on living now? What on earth shall we do if you become lame?"

"But Aunt Ninette," Dora said between her sobs, "perhaps it won't be so terrible. Don't you remember what papa used to say:

'Yet God keeps watch above us
And doeth all things well'?"

"Ah, yes, that is true, but if you are crippled you are crippled," wailed the aunt anew. "It is enough to drive one to despair. But come here! No, go now. Better come to the water here! But where is Mrs. Kurd? We must send for the doctor at once."

Dora went to her wash basin while the aunt ran to Mrs. Kurd and urged her to send for the physician without a moment's delay. One could not tell what danger there might be in such an injury.

The doctor came as soon as he was able, examined the wound, stopped the blood and made a tight bandage without saying a word, though Aunt Ninette had several times tried

hard to bring him to some declaration. Taking his hat, he was soon at the door.

"But, doctor, won't you tell me?" said Aunt Ninette, accompanying him further, "Tell me, doctor, will her arm remain lame? Lame for life?"

"Let us hope not! I'll come again tomorrow," was the answer, after which the physician was gone.

"'Let us hope not,'" repeated Aunt Ninette in a despairing voice. "With a doctor that means yes. Oh, what will become of us? What shall we do? We can never pull through now."

The aunt never stopped wailing the entire day.

When the mother that night came to Willi's bed to say his prayers with him she did not find him sitting happily on his bed as usual, eager to detain her for a long talk.

He was crouched together and did not look up at her when she sat down beside him. Nor did he speak.

"Willi, what is the matter?" asked the mother; "something is troubling you. Did you do something wicked?"

Willi gave forth an incomprehensible sound, which was neither yes nor no.

"Come, say your evening song, Willi. Maybe that will open your heart," said the mother again.

Willi began:

> "The moon is now ascending,
> The golden stars are lending
> Their beauty to the night."

But he prayed mechanically, constantly listening to every sound outside. He also gazed at the door, as if something dreadful might enter at any moment. From his restless glances one could see that he was suffer-

ing from some inner terror. When he came to the end of his song:

> "Oh, take us in Thy keeping,
> Dear Lord, while we are sleeping,
> And watch o'er those in pain."

Willi burst into violent sobs, and tightly clinging to his mother, cried out, "The child won't ever be able to sleep again and God will punish us frightfully."

"What do you mean, Willi?" asked the mother gently. "Come, tell me what has happened. I have known all day you must have been naughty. What was it?"

"We have—we have—perhaps we shot a child dead," was heard at last.

"Willi, what are you saying?" cried the mother, frightened, for she immediately remembered the doctor's hurried appearance at her neighbor's cottage. "But that isn't possible. Explain to me what happened."

Willi related from the beginning what Lili and he had done, how they had heard the moan, after which they had run away. They were so frightened now they would rather die at once, he said, than live any longer in such dread.

"Now you see, Willi, what comes from disobedience," said the mother sternly. "You thought it wasn't very bad for you to play a little with the bow and arrow, but your father knew very well what danger there might be in it. That is why he forbade you to use it. We can't tell yet what terrible thing has happened through your disobedience. Therefore we will earnestly implore God to make only good come out of your wicked action."

The mother began to say a prayer which Willi continued himself. He had never in his life prayed as fervently as he did at that anxious moment. He could hardly stop,

because he felt such intense relief in praying and it was wonderful to lay his trouble in God's hands. He earnestly begged His forgiveness and His assistance. Willi experienced great happiness in being able to look up at his mother again and he said goodnight with a lighter heart.

In the room opposite Lili was waiting for her mother. As the latter stepped up to her little one's bed, she said seriously, "Will you say your prayers, Lili?" Lili began, then stopped. Once more she began and stopped abruptly. Dreadfully uneasy, she said now, "Mamma, I can't pray. God is angry with me."

"What did you do, Lili? What makes you so sure God is angry with you?"

Lili remained silent and pulled her sheet to and fro, for she was an obstinate little person.

"If our God is not satisfied with you, I

am not, either. Now I must go. Sleep well, if you can," said the mother, turning to leave the room.

"Mamma!" shrieked Lili, "don't go! I'll tell you everything."

The mother turned around.

"We shot with the bow, though we were not allowed to do it. And we hit something that cried out. Then we were awfully frightened and ran away. Afterwards we were still more scared and we can't be happy any more."

"Of course you can't be happy now," agreed the mother. "Just think, Lili! Because of your disobedience a poor child over there has to suffer dreadful pain. She may even be here without her mother, for she is a stranger. She is probably crying all night in the strange house."

"I want to go over to the child and stay with it," Lili began pitifully crying. "I can't sleep, mamma, I am so scared."

"You see, Lili, that is the way we always feel when we have done wrong. I'll go to the poor child and you must pray to God for an obedient heart and beg Him to keep bitter suffering away from the innocent child you wounded."

Lili obeyed and was glad she could pray again. After confessing her guilt she did not feel as if God were angry with her any more, and she begged Him from the bottom of her heart to make her good and obedient and to heal the poor hurt neighbor.

Immediately afterwards the mother sent Trine to Mrs. Kurd in order to find out if a child had been really shot, how it all had happened, and if the doctor had been brought for that reason.

Mrs. Kurd told Trine in detail how the arrow had flown through the hedge and into Dora's arm. She also repeated the doctor's words when asked about the dreadful con-

sequences that might result from the accident. He had promised to return the next day.

Trine carefully told her mistress everything she had learned and Mrs. Birkenfeld was glad to find the wound had not immediately endangered the child's life. She was especially relieved that the child's eye had not been struck, which possibility had troubled her the most.

## CHAPTER VII.

### IN THE GARDEN AT LAST

QUITE early the next morning Mrs. Birkenfeld went over to Mrs. Kurd's little house, where she was most joyously received. Mrs. Birkenfeld and Lili, her friend, had gone to school to Mr. Kurd, and the two girls had been his favorite pupils. They had been such diligent students that he experienced nothing but success and pleasure in his task and often during his life spoke about them to his wife. Mrs. Kurd at once led her neighbor into the house, anxious to talk, for she had not seen her since the strangers had arrived. Of course there was a great deal to tell about their ways of living and so on, and especially the accident of the day before.

When Mrs. Kurd had talked these things over a little Mrs. Birkenfeld asked for the

pleasure of meeting the boarders, and especially the little girl who had been wounded by the arrow.

Mrs. Kurd went away to give the message to Mrs. Ehrenreich, and soon the latter appeared, followed by Dora, looking very pale and thin and with a heavy bandage on her arm.

After the first greeting Mrs. Birkenfeld went up to the child and affectionately taking her hand inquired sympathetically about the wound. Then turning to Mrs. Ehrenreich expressed her deep regret over the accident and in friendly words asked after her and her husband's health. Aunt Ninette was not slow in saying how much his condition worried her. They had come here purposely for peace and quiet and the fine air besides, but he got none of these. He was obliged to keep his windows shut all day, for he could not stand any noise while working, and the dis-

turbances seemed incessant. In that way he was deprived of the good air. She also spoke of her anxiety that instead of being benefited by their vacation her husband should get worse here.

"I am so sorry the children have disturbed Mr. Ehrenreich so dreadfully at his work," said Mrs. Birkenfeld with understanding. "If Mr. Ehrenreich won't go on walks he should have an airy place for working, and that puts me in mind of a little summer-house in the back part of our garden, which is quite a distance from the house and the frequented places of the property. We keep a table and some chairs in it and I sincerely hope that Mr. Ehrenreich will make that his workroom. I shall take great pains to keep the children away from that neighborhood."

Aunt Ninette was delighted with this proposition and accepted the offer gratefully, promising to tell her husband at once.

"And you, dear child," said Mrs. Birkenfeld, turning to Dora, "you must come over to us daily and get strong and well. I hope your aunt will let you, for my children have a great wrong to make satisfaction for."

"May I really go to the lovely garden and play with the children?" asked Dora with sparkling eyes, hardly daring to believe her ears. Her aunt looked at her amazed; she had never seen Dora so joyful. Mrs. Birkenfeld was so deeply touched by the child's visible delight that tears rose to her eyes and she felt herself mysteriously drawn to Dora in deep affection. Those joyfully shining eyes woke in her a whole world of memories. After it was settled that Dora should come over immediately after lunch and spend the rest of the day with the children, Mrs. Birkenfeld went home.

Aunt Ninette at once went to her husband

and told him about the remote little summer-house that had been kindly offered to him. Mr. Titus was much pleased. He had really begun to suffer from the lack of air, and as it was against his principles to lose much precious time, he had not been able to make up his mind to take a daily walk. An airy place for his studies was exactly what he wanted and he proposed to examine the summer-house at once. Aunt Ninette went along. They walked around the garden in order to avoid the numerous family and came at last to a little garden gate leading directly to the pavilion, just as Mrs. Birkenfeld had explained to them.

Two old walnut trees and a weeping willow with dense and deeply drooping branches stood beside the little house and behind it a large meadow stretched down the incline. Everything round about lay in silence and peace. Mr. Titus had brought out two large

books under each arm, for he meant to begin on his work at once if he liked the place. Aunt Ninette was carrying some paper and ink and Dora marched behind with a wax taper and some cigars. Mr. Titus, liking the spot extremely, lost no time but settled down at the table to work. He breathed the delicious air deeply into his lungs and rubbed his hands with satisfaction. Then he began to write at once and Aunt Ninette and Dora returned to the house, knowing he wanted to be left alone.

The news of the twins' last misdeed had quickly spread in the big house. Rolf, coming back from his Latin lesson, had gone at once for his bow. When he found one of the arrows missing he had rushed into the house, wild with rage, to find the culprit. It was not at all difficult for him to discover this, for the twins were still repentant and at once remorsefully admitted their crime.

They even informed their brother of the cry of pain they had heard after shooting. They took Rolf to Mrs. Kurd's garden and showed him where the arrow might be. Sure enough, there it lay on the ground. As soon as Rolf was reconciled by finding the arrow, he ran at once to Paula and Jul, crying, "Did you know they shot a child?" That was the reason why all six children with Miss Hanenwinkel behind them, stood on the stone steps outside the house waiting in suspense and agitation for their mother's return. She had hardly come in sight when Hun cried, "Where did they shoot her?" And all bombarded her with questions. "Is it a child?" "Is it a boy?" "How big is it?" "What is its name?" "Is it much hurt?"

"Come inside, children," said the mother, trying to keep them within bounds. When they all stood around her she told them that

Willi and Lili had hurt a frail little girl, who could not move her arm, but was obliged to carry it in a tight bandage. The child was of Paula's age and spoke beautifully. She was well brought up and looked extremely pleasant. Her name was Dora and she was coming over that afternoon to make their acquaintance.

They were even more interested now and the children wondered what Dora looked like, and whether they could understand her. Each hoped to be her special friend.

But Paula, who was more deeply thrilled than anybody, said, "Oh, mamma, I am so glad that she is just my age. Isn't it nice she is so refined? Oh, how glad I am!" In secret she already schemed for a great and lasting friendship with her little neighbor and could hardly wait for the afternoon to come. Rolf thought that Dora would be just the right age for him and hoped secretly she

would enjoy guessing his charades. The twins, feeling that Dora was their special property, as long as they had shot her, counted already on her being a useful playmate. For their schemes and games they often wished for a third and Paula was almost never in the mood to be of help. Hun said, full of satisfaction, "I shall be glad when Dora comes, for I can go to her when no one else has time and all our chairs are topsy-turvy." He was thinking of his dreary hours on Saturday morning when he never knew what to play or do. Jul in his turn asked his little brother, "But, Hun, what do you think Dora and I could do together?"

"I know," said the little one, after a short reflection. "Dora can help us to take off your riding boots. Last time there were not nearly enough of us; remember?"

"You are right," said Jul, delighted.

Dora lived through the morning in joyful trepidation, not knowing what to do from happiness. Her great wish at last was coming true and she was to visit the merry children in their pretty garden. But suddenly she was filled with qualms. She had learned to know and love the children at her place of observation, whereas she was quite unknown to them. Not only that, but the consciousness of being so ignorant and awkward compared to them cast her spirits down. She knew how accomplished and clever they all were, and it was quite possible they would have nothing to do with her at all. These conjectures in turn troubled and delighted her during the dinner hour and made it difficult for her to eat. At last the wished-for time came when Aunt Ninette said to Dora, "You can go now."

The child put on her hat and set out at once, entering the front hall of the big

house. She walked through the long corridor straight towards the garden at the other end, where the door stood open.

Most unexpectedly she found herself face to face with the whole family. All were gathered under the apple tree as usual, and Dora was not prepared for this, having only expected to see the children. She therefore stopped short and gazed at them timidly. But the little Hun had eagerly waited for Dora and jumped from his seat the moment he saw her. Stretching out his hand, he called, "Won't you come here, Dora? There is enough room for us both on my chair, come!" He had run up to her and seizing her hand he pulled her towards the group. The other children also ran towards Dora and gave her a greeting as if she were the oldest friend of the family. In the midst of questions and greetings Dora had reached the parents, who welcomed her most affec-

tionately. Soon her shyness completely vanished and a few moments later she sat sharing a chair with Hun as if she belonged to them entirely. Father and mother had risen and walked up and down the garden, while the children came closer and closer to Dora, each talking very hard. Paula said less than the others but quietly made her observations. Rolf and the twins stood as near as possible to the little visitor and Hun had actual hold of her, in the fear she might escape him.

"If you crush Dora the very first time she comes, she won't be able to come again," said Jul, who had stretched himself out full length in his chair. "Give her a little room to breathe, please."

"How old are you, Dora? You aren't much older than I, are you?" asked Lili in great suspense.

"I am just twelve years old," answered Dora.

"Oh, what a shame! Then you are Paula's age," sighed Lili, who had hoped to own Dora more than anybody else.

"No, no," cried Rolf, "Dora is nearer my age than Paula's," a circumstance which seemed most propitious to the boy. "Are you good at guessing rhymed charades, Dora? Do you like doing it?"

"I made a charade, too," cried little Hun loudly; "guess this one, Dora! You can't drink my first—but—"

Rolf cut his small brother's charade indignantly in half: "Don't keep on repeating that senseless charade. You know it is no good at all, Hun!" he exclaimed. "Listen to me, Dora! My first tastes——"

But Rolf got no chance to say his riddle, either, for Lili had seized Dora's hand, and pulling her along, said urgently, "Come, Dora, come! I'll play them all now." Dora had asked Lili if she knew how to play the

piano and Lili found that the right moment for claiming Dora had come. Lili quickly won her victory, for Dora rose from her seat, anxious to hear Lili play. But she was sorry to offend Rolf.

"Don't mind my going, Rolf," she said, turning back. "I am sure I couldn't guess your charade and then it wouldn't be fun for you."

"Won't you try once?" asked Rolf, slightly disappointed.

"If you want me to I'll try it later," Dora called back, for Lili had already pulled her as far as the house. Hun had not let go, either, and hanging to her hand, had cried incessantly, "Mine, too, Dora, mine too!" With great friendliness she promised to guess his also.

The little group, including Willi, who also played, had come to the instrument now. The twins had taken lessons from Miss

Hanenwinkel the last year, the parents hoping that it would prove first of all a pleasure for the children. Next, they thought that music might have a softening influence on their natures, and besides, while working, at least, they would be kept from mischief.

Lili, who had drawn Dora close to the piano, suddenly remembered how she herself usually felt about the matter and said, "You know, Dora, it is really terribly tiresome to play the piano. Often I would rather die than practise. Don't you think so, too, Willi?"

Willi eagerly supported that opinion.

"But Lili, how can you talk that way?" said Dora, looking with longing glances at the piano. "It would give me the greatest happiness to be able to sit down and play a pretty song the way you do it!"

"Would it?" asked Lili, surprised, thoughtfully looking up at Dora, whose long-

ing eyes finally proved contagious. Opening the piano, she began to play her song, and Dora sat down beside the child, drinking in the melody as if Lili were giving her the greatest treat.

Lili, seeing this, became enthusiastic, too, and played very well. Willi, seeing the effect his sister's piece produced, was anxious to show off, too, and said, "Let me do it, too, Lili." But Lili, who was so fired with new spirit, never stopped a moment, but played her little piece over and over again.

"Don't you know another?" asked Dora.

"No, Miss Hanenwinkel won't give me another till I play my exercises better," Lili replied. "But I know what I'll do from now on. Just wait till tomorrow, Dora! Yes, I know still something else," continued Lili, turning round on her piano stool, "I'll give you piano lessons and then you'll learn to play the song, too. Then we can learn to play other pieces together, won't we?"

"Oh, can you do that, Lili?" asked Dora, looking so blissfully happy that Lili resolved to start the lessons on the morrow.

"But, Lili, I can't do it with my arm," said Dora, suddenly looking gloomy.

But Lili was not so quickly discouraged. "It will soon be better and till then I'll learn so much that I can teach you better," she comforted her prospective pupil.

The large bell rang for supper now. Hastily little Hun seized Dora's hand, showing that no time was to be lost. Papa always appeared punctually at meals and Hun was always ready to go when called.

The table, which was set under the apple tree, was laden with many delightful things. Dora, who sat in the midst of the children, could not help looking about her at the flowers, the lovely tree above her, and the friendly faces that seemed to her like close friends. She felt as if she must be dream-

ing; it was so wonderful and so much more beautiful than she had imagined, that it hardly seemed real. A fear rose in her heart that she might suddenly wake up and find it all an illusion. But Dora did not awaken from a dream, and while she wondered about her bliss, a number of substantial objects had been heaped on her plate, giving her the full consciousness that her happiness was real.

"Eat your cake, Dora, or you'll be behindhand," said Hun, much concerned. "Jul and I have already eaten four. Jul and I can do everything well except take off his riding boots. But you'll help us with that, Dora, won't you?"

"Hun, eat your cake," urged Jul, and Dora was prevented from giving an answer to his curious question. Mr. Birkenfeld began a conversation with Dora and wanted to know about her father and her life in Hamburg and Karlsruhe.

Till now Paula had not attempted to go near Dora. When the meal was over, Paula quietly stole up to the latter's chair and said, "Come with me a little while, Dora."

Overjoyed, Dora followed this invitation, for she had been afraid that Paula did not like her and wanted to have nothing to do with her, whereas she herself was drawn to Paula very much. But Paula had been anxious to find out first about Dora's nature and, liking it, she took Dora's arm and both disappeared in the depth of the garden. However hard the twins, Hun and Rolf, sought for the two and called them, they could not be found, for Paula, making a complete circle around the garden, had led Dora up to her own room. Here the two sat together and found many, many things to talk about, things they had never been able to discuss with others. Neither of them ever had a friend of the same age and both

experienced for the first time the joy of finding a companion with similar interests and ideals. Paula and Dora formed a firm bond of friendship and were so happy at having found each other that they forgot everything else and did not notice that the stars already gleamed in the sky and night had come.

The mother, finally guessing where the two girls might be, entered the room and Dora jumped up amazed. Her aunt was probably already waiting for her, for it was late.

The other children stood downstairs, a little disappointed that Dora had disappeared, for all had made some plan for the evening. Rolf was especially angry: "You know, Dora," he said, "you promised to guess my charade. Can you still do it?"

But Dora had to go home. Upon leaving, the mother invited her to come every day, at least as long as it was impossible to sew

shirts. This brought loud acclamations of joy from the children and it was settled that Dora would come every morning and stay all day, for every moment of her holidays must be properly enjoyed by all. The leave-taking seemed to have no end, and every child had something special to tell her. At last Rolf abruptly cut short the conversation. He had the last chance to talk with her, having received permission to take her home. When they walked over the open space in front of the house, the stars gleamed so brightly that Dora paused in her walk.

"Do you see those five sparkling stars, Rolf?" she asked, pointing to the firmament. "I have known them for a long time. They always shine into my room in Karlsruhe and here they are again."

"Oh, I know them well," Rolf answered promptly. "They are on my map. Do you know their names?"

"No, I don't! Do you really know the names of stars, Rolf? Oh, you know so much!" said Dora admiringly. "Don't those five have a name and belong together? I am sure I've seen others, too, that belong together. At least they seem to. Do you know them all, Rolf? Oh, I'd love to learn about them from you."

Rolf was delighted at having a new subject of study to share with Dora.

"We can start right away, Dora," he said eagerly. "Come, I'll show them all to you, one after another, even if it should take us till twelve o'clock."

These words reminded Dora that it was already late.

"No, no, Rolf," she said hastily, "not tonight, but thank you just the same. But will you do it tomorrow?"

"Surely we'll do it tomorrow, and don't forget you promised. Good-night, Dora."

"Good-night, Rolf," Dora called out

before hastening into the house. She was so full of happiness over the whole wonderful afternoon that she ran right up to her waiting aunt and began to tell about everything at once. Her vivacity and animation quite alarmed her aunt. "Dora, Dora, just think! The excitement might affect your wounded arm. Go to bed and sleep, that will be the best," she said.

Dora went to her room at once, but felt unable to go to sleep. First of all she knelt down by her bedside and thanked God for the happiness she had experienced. The most blissful holidays were before her, after which she would not mind going back to her dreary work. She resolved in her deepest soul to endure the long, sad winter days without complaints, never forgetting her charming friends. Dora could not shut her eyes for a long time, she was so deeply grateful and overjoyed.

## CHAPTER VIII

### STILL MORE RIDDLES AND THEIR SOLUTION

EARLY next morning, after rattling through the hall with his big boots and spurs, Jul opened the schoolroom door, whence he had heard loud sounds of practising. He knew Miss Hanenwinkel gave no lessons so early in the day and was most surprised to see Lili at the piano, Willi eagerly awaiting his turn to play.

"What is the matter with you?" Jul called in to them. "Is this the beginning of another dreadful scheme of yours?"

"Be quiet, Jul, we don't want to lose any time," Lili replied in deep earnest.

Jul gave a loud laugh and went his way. He met Miss Hanenwinkel below and asked her, "What has struck the twins, I wonder? Are they really trying to become virtuous all of a sudden?"

"Children seven years old sometimes succeed better in that than those of seventeen, Mr. Jul," was the curt answer.

Jul had to laugh as he went towards the front door. Here he met his mother, who was just about to use this early hour and go to the physician to find out if Dora's injury was really serious. The aunt's frightened words had made her anxious and she wanted to know if the wound might have serious consequences for the little girl.

"Somebody seems to be playing on the piano, Jul," said his mother. "What can it mean at this early hour?"

"Dear mamma, I think the world is coming to an end," the son replied. "Lili is rushing through her finger exercises as if they were giving her supreme delight and Willi stands besides her burning to do the same."

"This is curious," remarked the mother,

"for only yesterday Miss Hanenwinkel complained that Lili was even too lazy to practise her little piece, not to speak of her finger exercises, which she would not touch at all."

"As I said before, mamma, the world is nearing its end," concluded Jul, taking leave of his mother.

"Perhaps on the contrary it is beginning," she retorted, starting on her errand.

As soon as Mrs. Birkenfeld was admitted to the doctor's office, she inquired after Dora's wound and was informed that it was healing rapidly. To her anxious question if the arm might remain stiff for life he laughed and said that was out of the question. When young people had been foolish he often found it advisable to keep them in suspense in order to teach them a lesson, for such a mishap might be more serious a second time. The doctor was quite sure the

injury would be healed in a couple of days. Mrs. Birkenfeld was intensely relieved, as she could not have borne the feeling that her thoughtless children had caused the little stranger a permanent injury.

Before returning home Mrs. Birkenfeld stopped at her neighbor's house to see Aunt Ninette and reassure her, too, about Dora. When talking about the little girl she heard from the aunt for the first time that Dora, for urgent financial reasons, was to become a seamstress.

This deeply grieved Mrs. Birkenfeld, for Dora seemed too young and frail for such confining, constant work. She was quite glad that the child would have a long holiday before going back to the city. Mrs. Birkenfeld begged the aunt to let Dora off from sewing till her arm was completely healed and let her be out of doors and play with her own children. A seamstress she

knew could sew some shirts meanwhile if necessary.

Mrs. Birkenfeld's quiet, thoughtful ways had a most beneficent influence on Aunt Ninette, who never once complained during their long conversation. All her recent worries had somehow vanished and her outlook had grown bright and cheerful, which made her feel quite strange. She spoke gratefully of her husband's well-being in the pleasant, airy summer house, which he liked so much that he was unwilling to forsake it, even late at night. Upon leaving, Mrs. Birkenfeld invited her neighbor to come to her garden as often as possible, since otherwise she would be so lonely. Aunt Ninette promised to do this, quite forgetting the noisy children who had annoyed her so much at first.

Dora had hardly opened her eyes that morning when she was out of bed with a

jump. The joyful prospect of going over after breakfast had made her wide awake at once. She had to wait quite a little while, though, before she was allowed to go, because her aunt did not approve of being too forward. Only after Mrs. Birkenfeld, who had stayed quite a while, asked for Dora, was she called, and then allowed to go. This time she neither paused nor looked about her shyly, but in a few leaps was in the corridor of the big house. Through the open door of the living room she received a many-sided welcome. The twins Paula and Hun, ran towards her and led her into the room. Jul had just returned from his morning ride and had flung himself into an armchair, stretched out his long legs in front of him, as if extending an invitation for somebody to rid him of his boots. Dora immediately rushed up to him and asked obligingly if she might take them off, taking hold of the boots at once. But Jul pulled his feet back hastily

and exclaimed, "No, no, Dora, how can you dream of such a thing? I won't let you!" Then politely jumping from his seat he offered it to Dora. But the twins pulled her along between them and cried loudly, "Come with us, Dora, come with us!" Hun, who had taken hold of her from behind, cried lustily, "Come with me, come with me!" Paula whispered into Dora's ear at the same time, "Go with the twins first, or they will only cry and fuss. I will look for you later on."

"Dora," said Jul now, trying to subdue the little ones, "you had better stick to me if you want to have a peaceful existence in this house. If you spend all your time with Paula you are bound to become terribly romantic, and that will make you lose your appetite. With Rolf you will find your whole life turned to an unfathomable riddle."

"Which it is in any case," remarked Miss

Hanenwinkel, who at that moment was passing through the room.

"If you spend much time with Miss Hanenwinkel," Jul went on rapidly in order to give the governess the chance of hearing his words, "you will be salted instead of sweetened like dried plums. If you stay with the twins, they will tear you to pieces, and Hun, sooner or later, will rob you of your sense of hearing."

But despite the threatening dangers, Dora let herself be drawn along by the twins, while Hun followed behind. At the piano Lili immediately began her song. Whenever she finished playing it, she gazed at Dora, and seeing her listener nod her head, began again. Dora suddenly began to sing, and Willi, who was waiting in vain for his chance to play, joined in with little Hun, thus making a noisy chorus.

"Rejoice, rejoice in life
While yet the lamp is glowing!"

While singing, the musicians got more eager, and little Hun was inspired to the most ear-splitting performance. Suddenly Lili turned about on her stool.

"Just wait, Dora. I'll have a surprise for you tomorrow," the little girl cried with sparkling eyes. Having practised so faithfully that day Lili felt herself entitled to learn at least half a dozen new pieces from Miss Hanenwinkel.

A bell rang which called the twins to their lessons, and Hun greatly rejoiced at his chance to have Dora all to himself. She devoted the rest of the morning to him and entered so deeply into the clever tricks of his nutcracker that he resolved never to let go of her all his life. But his plan was frustrated immediately after lunch. Paula, who had finished her French studies, drew Dora aside, with the mother's full approval. The two felt so much drawn to each other that they would have liked to spend all day and

night together, and tell each other everything that they hoped and feared, their past experiences and hopes for the future. Both had the feeling that they could never get tired of each other, even if they spent a lifetime in each other's company.

They again forgot that time was passing, and only at seven o'clock, when the whole family had assembled for supper under the apple tree, the two returned. They seated themselves as quietly as possible, for papa had noticeably cleared his throat as a sign that something was not quite in order. During the meal Rolf glanced several times at Dora as if to remind her his time had come.

When after supper they all sat together talking merrily, Rolf kept a watchful eye on the firmament, and as soon as the first star began to sparkle through the branches, he leaped up and ran towards Dora.

"Do you see the star, Dora? Come now!" With this he pulled her with him into the

most solitary part of the garden near some walnut trees, thereby preventing his brothers and sisters from taking Dora away from him. Rolf felt secure here, and standing on a suitable post, began to instruct her.

"Do you see your five stars there, Dora? First one alone, then two together and two again. Can you see them?"

"Oh, yes, I know them very well," Dora assured him.

"Good! They are called Cassiopeia, and now I'll show you another. But that reminds me of a charade I made up lately. Could you quickly guess it?"

"I will if I can, but I am afraid your charades are too difficult for me."

"No, no, just listen hard. I'll say it very slowly:

"My first in closest bonds can two unite,
My second like the shining sun is bright,
My whole's a flower that thrives in summer light."

"Did you guess it?"

"No, Rolf, I can never guess that; I am so sorry, I know I am dreadfully slow. It will be awfully tiresome for you to be with me," said Dora regretfully.

"Of course not! You are not used to it yet, Dora," Rolf consoled her. "Try it a few times and you'll do it quite easily. I'll say another quite easy one now:

" 'My first is just an animal forlorn,
My second that to which we should be heir,
And with my whole some lucky few are born,
While others win it if they fight despair.' "

"I can't guess that one either! Please don't take such trouble with me, Rolf. You see I never did it before," wailed Dora.

"Wait, you might guess another," and before Dora could deny him Rolf had begun to recite with a loud voice:

"My first one oft bestows upon a pet,
My second makes a wholesome kind of bread;
My third is something each one tries to get—
And often spends my whole before he's dead."

"I know," said a deep bass voice behind the children, startling them for a moment. But right after Dora gave a merry laugh.

"It is Uncle Titus. He is still working in the summer house. Come, Rolf, let's go to him."

Rolf was willing, and when the two entered, Uncle Titus, who was comfortably leaning against the wall, looked very much pleased.

Rolf, after replying pleasantly to Mr. Ehrenreich's greeting, asked him casually if he had guessed the charade.

"I suppose it is patrimony, my son," said Mr. Titus, patting Rolf's shoulder.

"Yes, it is," Rolf answered, pleased. "Did you guess the others, too, Mr. Ehrenreich?" Rolf inquired.

"Possibly, my son," replied Mr. Titus. "Would I be wrong if I said the first was marigold and the second courage?"

"Oh, you guessed them all!" exclaimed

Rolf, rejoicing. "It is wonderful to make charades if somebody can guess them. I have another, in fact three more. May I ask you another, Mr. Ehrenreich?"

"Surely, dear son, why not?" replied Mr. Titus kindly. "Just say them and I'll do my best to solve them."

After refreshing his memory a little, Rolf began. "The first is the shortest and easiest:

'A tiny thing, my first, which yet may move;
While for my second you need not look far;
To be my third is still against the rule—
My whole goes far beyond what's learned in school.'"

"Can you guess it?"

"Perhaps so; go on."

Rolf went on:

"My first is what no coward soul will do,
My second you will find in every face;
My third will often we ourselves replace—
My whole a Persian monarch, brave and true."

"Do you know it already?"

"Possibly. Now another!"

"A longer one now:

'My first a place where corn and wheat are ground,
My second about many a neck is found;
My third with succor does the meaning share,
My fourth is freedom from all work and care.
My whole a famous Greek of long ago,
Who put to rout the mighty Persian foe.' "

"Now, my son, I shall tell you what I think," said Mr. Titus with a happy smile. "Number one, speculate; number two, Darius; number three, Miltiades!"

"Every one correct! Oh what fun! I have always longed for some one to guess charades," said Rolf, highly satisfied, "but I had to run around with them all unsolved. Now I can start on some fresh ones."

"I make you a proposal, son," said Mr. Titus, getting up from his seat with the intention of going home: "Come to me every night and bring me the fruits of your reflection. I may give you some to solve, too, some day."

The study of the stars had to be put off for

another evening, because it had grown too late.

Happy over the pleasant meeting, Rolf and Dora ran back to the rest of the family, who were expecting them, while Mr. Titus, delighted with having found such a pleasant young friend, went home.

Mr. Titus had always wished for a son, preferably one who came to this world at the age of twelve and had behind him the stage where he found it necessary to cry and scream, one who could be a sensible companion, with whom one could talk. Rolf answered his wishes exactly, while the boy himself was obviously delighted to have Uncle Titus's friendship. The scientist felt a real fatherly affection for the lad, which new emotion unbarred his solitary heart. As he wandered homewards Uncle Titus suddenly began to sing:

"Rejoice, rejoice in Life
While yet the lamp is glowing!"

for the gay melody had penetrated as far as his hermitage that morning and apparently had proved contagious.

Upstairs at the open window stood Aunt Ninette, saying to herself, "Is this really my husband?"

## CHAPTER IX

### FOUND AT LAST

THE time seemed to fly for everybody in the Birkenfeld household, as well as the little neighboring cottage, and all the inmates would exclaim from time to time, "Oh, is another week really gone?" or "How can it be Sunday again?" For everybody, but especially for Dora, the days passed so pleasantly that they seemed only half as long as those in Karlsruhe. Every night when going to bed she regretted having to lose so much precious time in sleep, and she would have been delighted to sit all night at the piano while the others slept, to practise her little pieces. Her arm had healed long ago and Lili gave her a daily piano lesson. Lili proved a most enthusiastic teacher, who expected no scales or exercises from her

pupil and at once let her learn the favorite piece, "Rejoice, rejoice in Life!" Dora had already learned to play it with the right hand alone, the accompaniment of the left hand being as yet too difficult to attempt. The little teacher herself made such surprising progress that Miss Hanenwinkel, who till now had only been able to utter complaints about Lili's musical performances, was most astonished at the sudden fruits of her labors. The mother also joyfully noticed the change and often paused near the open door in order to listen to the little girl's vigorous and agile playing. The child had real talent for music and progressed very fast since her love for it had been awakened.

Paula swam all day in uninterrupted bliss, for her longed-for wish had come true, she at last had a friend, and what a friend! Dora understood her inmost thoughts and

experiences and was able to share everything with her. Paula, who all her life had looked for a friend in vain, found the reality even more lovely than anything she had imagined. Dora was too adorable a being for anyone to just invent. She, like her bosom friend, regretted ever having to go to bed and hated losing any of the precious time still left.

Rolf's studies in the matter of charades had taken on such a serious character that he could frequently be seen running up and down the garden paths with hands folded behind his back. At such times little Hun had to be kept out of his way, because Rolf had several times actually run into the small boy and thrown him down. Rolf enjoyed preparing his intricate charades for Mr. Titus, who was not only interested, but apparently found great pleasure in Rolf's scholarly turn of mind. The learned man,

by being able to guess the most obscure historical names on the spot, urged the boy to greater and more constant efforts, and besides awakened the lad's zeal for Latin by composing rhymed charades in that language. These were written down and were meant to be studied most carefully. Rolf read these regularly to Jul and his father, but neither could ever guess them. His father had forgotten his Latin too much for such work, while Jul was of the opinion that such useless exertions were not healthy in the holidays. He had to keep his mental vigor undiminished till he took up his own work at school again. Rolf, on the contrary, puzzled and searched for the sense by looking through his Latin dictionary and did not give up till he at last found the solution. This he would triumphantly reveal to his father and Jul, and finally to Mr. Titus in the evening. The friendly man always

showed himself almost more pleased at Rolf's success than the boy was himself, helping him in that way to great progress in his Latin studies. He began these studies quite early in the morning, and it seemed as if he could not imbibe enough knowledge.

Little Hun also passed very happy days. Whatever time and however often he came to Dora and demanded her attention, she never pushed him aside nor ran away, but in the most kindly manner entertained him as if she herself found great pleasure in his company. Mrs. Birkenfeld had begged Aunt Ninette to let Dora be free all morning and evening, and let her sew in the afternoons when the whole family was gathered under the apple tree. Dora here realized that sewing shirts was a most pleasant occupation when one worked in nice surroundings.

In that way Hun had Dora to himself many hours of the day when no one had

time to interfere. Dora had made a new riddle for her little friend, too, so he need not repeat his old one of the nutcracker forever. He was determined to dish up charades to everybody, and his triumph was complete when no one in the house could solve it. Running persistently from one to another he was glad they could not say as before, "Go away, Hun, and don't keep on repeating your stupid old charade." Every time they made a mistake he leaped for joy and he and Dora pledged each other not to give anyone a clue.

"My first makes everybody cry!
My second some, then we deny
Ourselves to take the whole when it appears,
Because it nearly always does bring tears."

All had tried in vain to solve it.

Jul said it was "misdeed." Everybody cries when Miss Hanenwinkel comes to make them work, and at the deeds she makes them do some cry. And when a misdeed is perpe-

trated many denials result, especially when the twins are the criminals, in which case tears are always the end.

But Hun joyfully hopped about, crying, "You are wrong, you are wrong, Jul!"

Miss Hanenwinkel said, "It is music lesson. Music makes everybody cry. In the lesson many cry and many denials have to be made during the lessons."

"Wrong, wrong," cried the small boy, delighted.

"It is school-room," asserted Rolf.

"Aha, Rolf, you guessed wrong," Hun cried triumphantly.

"Couldn't it be bedtime?" said the mother. "All children cry in bed some time or other, some cry when the time comes, and all deny bedtime has come."

"Mamma can't guess it, either; mamma doesn't know," jubilated the little fellow, leaping about.

"It might be leave-taking," said the father. "Leave-taking makes everybody cry, taking some children away makes some cry and at Dora's leave-taking everybody is sorry."

"Papa can't guess it either, papa can't guess it!" rejoiced the small boy, jumping merrily around the room, for it gave him the keenest pleasure that even his father had missed it. The happy possessor of the great secret could still dash from one member of the family to another and puzzle them all.

Rolf was much put out that Hun's foolish charade should attract so much attention without ever getting solved.

Relentlessly the days passed on.

"My dear Ninette," Uncle Titus said at breakfast one day, "we have only one more week, but I think we ought to add two more weeks to our stay, for I feel so well here. My dizzy spells have completely left me and there is new vigor in my limbs."

"One can easily see that, dear Titus," replied his wife, delighted. "You look at least ten years younger than when we came."

"It seems to me our new mode of life suits you also, dear, for I have not heard you complain for a long time now."

"That is true. Everything seems all changed somehow," answered Aunt Ninette. "The noise the children make is not a bit bad when one knows them all and I am glad we did not move from here. I even begin to miss it when I do not hear their merry voices, and things do not seem quite right when there is no noise in the garden."

"That's exactly the way I feel," agreed Uncle Titus. "I enjoy the lively boy so much when he comes running to me every night. He can hardly control his eagerness to tell me what he has composed, and when I set him my task, he drinks in every word

I say. It is pure pleasure to have such a boy to talk to."

"My dear Titus, how enthusiastic you are! That makes you seem younger than I have ever known you. We had better stay here as long as we can afford it," the aunt concluded. "Even our doctor could never have predicted such an improvement from our journey. It is just wonderful."

Immediately after this conversation Dora rushed over to her friends, spreading the happy news. The prospect of her near departure had been a perfect nightmare to the child and she felt like dying rather than living so far away from all the intimate friends she loved so dearly. Dora anticipated a broken heart on the day of their separation. As soon as the children heard about their playmate's lengthened stay, they crushed Dora from sheer transport and noisily expressed their happiness.

That same evening when the children had gone to bed and Miss Hanenwinkel had retired, Mr. and Mrs. Birkenfeld, according to their daily custom, sat together on the sofa, talking over their common problems. They mentioned the fact that their neighbors were lengthening their stay, and after expressing her joy the mother concluded with these words: "I actually dread the day when we shall lose the child, and it is not very far off. It is impossible to say what a blessing Dora has been to our household, and it is evident at every step. I keep on discovering new traces of her good influence all the time. I don't quite know why the child attracts me so much. All I can say is that a world of memories stirs in me whenever I look into her eyes. I don't pretend to understand it."

"My dearest wife, you think this every time you grow fond of a person," Mr.

Birkenfeld interposed. "I can remember quite well that you thought we must have stood in some incomprehensible relationship long ago, when you just knew me a short time."

"However that may be, you bad, sarcastic husband," she retorted, "I suppose the solid reasons this time are enough. You can't deny that Dora is very dear and charming. I love her and I know how many of the pleasant changes in our household are due to her. Paula goes about like a ray of sunshine, there is not a trace left of her moodishness and bad humor. Jul takes off his riding boots himself without disturbing the whole household, and Rolf is so eager at his studies that he does not waste a minute of the day. Lili has developed a diligence and ability for music that surprises everybody, while Hun is always pleasantly occupied and looks so merry that it is a joy to see him."

"Can the fact that the twins have not perpetrated any evil deeds lately be due to Dora, too?" asked Mr. Birkenfeld.

"Doubtless," the wife answered. "Dora has somehow awakened Lili's enthusiasm for music and the lively child is putting all her energies into playing now. Willi does the same and in that way the two are kept out of mischief."

"Dora is really a curious being. Too bad she is leaving us," said Mr. Birkenfeld, quite regretfully.

"I regret it so much, too," his wife continued, "and I keep on wondering how we could keep them here a little longer."

"We can't," replied the husband, "for we don't know them well enough. We must let them go, but if they come back another year, something might be done about it."

Mrs. Birkenfeld sighed as she thought of

the long winter and the uncertainty of their return.

The days passed by quickly and the last week of Dora's stay had come. They were to leave on Monday, and the Sunday before a gay supper party was to take place, though everyone felt far from festive. Rolf alone was making eager preparations, which consisted in hanging up several charades, made transparent by multicolored lights, in the garden house in honor of his kind patron.

Dora sat down to lunch with the children on Saturday, and not much appetite was displayed by anybody. When the mother was helping them to their soup, several voices said, "Please, very little;" "Only a tiny bit for me;" "Not much for me;" "Better none for me at all." "None for me at all, please."

"I'd like to know if you all deny yourselves because the grief of the near parting

is so intense, or is it that the onion soup does not suit you?"

"Onion soup, oh, onion soup! Now I know the answer to Hun's charade," cried Rolf, delighted at the victory, for he had hardly been able to bear the humiliation of not guessing it before.

The solution proved correct.

Little Hun, who sat mournfully on his chair, said, "Oh, papa, if only you had not said that we deny ourselves this onion soup! Then nobody would ever have guessed my charade. Oh, all is over now!"

But Dora, who sat beside him, had consolation as always for the little one. She whispered in his ear, "It is not all over, Hun. This afternoon I'll guide your hand and you can write your charade in my album. I'll give it to lots of people in Karlsruhe who know nothing about it."

That proved a comfort to the little boy

and he finished his lunch without a scene. Afterwards all gathered under the apple tree as usual, except that the children were far from happy, as it was to be the last time that Dora would sit amongst them. Tomorrow she had to help her aunt with packing and would only be over in the evening with both her relatives.

Paula's eyes were filled with tears and she could not speak. Lili expressed her grief by wriggling nervously around, but at last she burst out passionately, "Oh, mamma, I don't want to play the piano any more when Dora goes. It will be so tiresome then, for Miss Hanenwinkel will just say that I am dreadfully lazy. I won't care for anything any more; nothing will be fun then."

"Oh, dear!" sighed Jul, "we are nearing hard and dangerous times as soon as the twins find life tiresome again. I can really

see no reason for Dora to depart," he continued. "It would do her a lot of good to stay till winter time. Why doesn't she? Her uncle and aunt can go back to their peaceful home in Karlsruhe alone."

The mother at once replied that she would beg for such a permission another year. For the present they had to be resigned to this separation which she herself was dreading, too.

Little Hun alone was more immediately concerned with the present than with the unknown future and remained content. Pulling Dora's apron he kept begging, "Please get your book for me, Dora. I want to write now."

The girl went to the house to fetch her album and asked all her dear friends to write a little verse in it for her, according to the good old custom. Her album looked far from elegant. It was very old, the pages

were yellowed by age and the ink was faded. Here and there little bunches of discolored flowers, with hardly any petals, were pasted in. All the songs and verses were written by a child's hand, having belonged to Dora's mother in her youth. Several funny little drawings enlivened the pages and one of a little house and a tiny man near a fountain especially attracted Hun's attention.

After turning several more pages he said with a knowing air, "Mamma has that, too!" Then pulling out a narrow slip of paper he declared, "This belongs to Lili, whom I have to bring back from America."

Jul burst out laughing. "What wonderful tales are you inventing for Dora now, young Hun?"

The mother after a rapid glance at her youngest child looked at the paper. Suddenly tears rushed to her eyes and dear old memories of past days rose vividly

before her, especially the merry face of her beloved Lili. She was completely overcome, for it brought back all her childhood days, the image of her own sweet mother, long years ago laid in the grave and all the vanished years of her youth, gone so irrevocably.

As soon as she saw the paper, she recognized it as the second half of the little verse she and Lili had composed together. Unable to read aloud from sheer emotion she handed to her husband the paper joined to her own half, which she drew out of the notebook where she had kept it ever since it had been found a few weeks before. The children whispered to each other and with suspense watched their father as he joined the two slips of yellowish gray paper, which together formed a sheet of writing paper of the usual size. They were written by the same childish hand, and the sense was now quite clear.

After looking the sheet over a little the father read aloud as follows:

"'Our hands lay clasped
In firmest tie,
We hoped together,
To live and to die.
But one has to stay,
The other must go.
Our hearts are heavy
With mutual woe.
We cut apart
This tiny song
And hope to join it
Before very long.
Once more united
Joyfully we'll cry;
'We can live again
In close friendship's tie.
We'll never take leave of each other again
And ne'ermore endure such deep, bitter pain.'"

The mother had grasped Dora's hand. "Where did you get that little paper, darling?" she asked with great emotion.

"It is my mother's album and that paper was always in it," answered Dora, surprised.

"Oh, Dora, you are my beloved Lili's child!" exclaimed the mother. "Now I understand why I always thought of the past when I looked at you." Greatly agitated, she embraced the little girl.

The children felt excited, too, but seeing their mother so profoundly moved, they controlled their emotions and remained silently in their seats, their glances fastened on Dora and the mother. Little Hun at last broke the silence: "Won't I have to go to America now mamma?" he asked, visibly relieved at the prospect of being able to stay at home, for after giving his rash promise he had felt a little scared at the thought of going to America alone.

"No, you won't have to go. We shall all stay here," replied the mother, turning towards the children with Dora's hand in hers. "Dora is Lili's little girl, whom you wanted to find."

"Oh, mamma!" cried Paula with unusual vivacity, "Dora and I will continue everything you began with Lili. Then we'll also be able to say like you:

'Once more united—
Joyfully we'll cry:
'We can live again,
In former friendship's tie.
We'll never take leave of each other again
And ne'ermore endure such deep, bitter pain.' "

"Yes, and we, too,"—"and I"—"Yes, and we, too—" "I want it, too!" cried Rolf, the twins and little Hun. Even Jul joined in with his deep bass voice. But the mother had already seized the father's arm and had disappeared with him under the trees.

"Yes, of course I am satisfied, I am perfectly satisfied," repeated the father several times to a question his wife was asking. Then they separated and the mother went to the little neighboring cottage, where she asked at once for Aunt Ninette. She related to

Mrs. Ehrenreich that she had just discovered to her great joy that Dora was the child of the best and dearest friend of her youth, whom she had mourned for many years. She knew that her friend had died, but hoped to hear more details about her life and Dora's circumstances. Mrs. Birkenfeld as well as Aunt Ninette had been reluctant till now to mention this last very delicate subject. Mrs. Birkenfeld could not find out as much about Lili as she had hoped, for Aunt Ninette had never known her. Her brother, who had lived in America for several years, had met and married Lili in that country, and after returning to Hamburg had lost her soon after Dora's birth. Mrs. Birkenfeld told Aunt Ninette how much gratitude she owed to Lili's family for all the happiness she had enjoyed at their house. The acquaintance with Lili had, in fact, shaped her whole future, and she wished to repay this debt.

With this she came to the chief object of her visit, namely, the request to be allowed to adopt Dora and raise her just like one of her own children.

No opposition was made to this, as Mrs. Birkenfeld had feared might be the case. On the contrary, Aunt Ninette was only too glad that Dora, who had been left practically destitute, should have found such generous friends. Sheer necessity would have obliged the child to begin earning her livelihood at once as a seamstress, which was a dreary outlook for the future. As she and her husband had not the means to furnish Dora with a higher education, the new prospect was most welcome and she was quite sure her husband would not oppose it either.

Mrs. Birkenfeld, after heartily pressing Aunt Ninette's hand, hastened away, in order to tell everybody the glad news. Her heart thrilled at the thought of her chil-

dren's joy, for she knew how fond they were of Dora.

They were still gathered under the apple tree, and all eyes were turned towards her in suspense, for they were sure that she was planning some pleasant surprise, possibly even a visit from Dora at their house.

When the mother told them that Dora would actually belong to the family from this time on and would be their sister always, susch cries of transport and delight broke forth that they penetrated into the furthest recesses of the garden. Uncle Titus stepped out of his summer house, and smiling happily at their merry exclamations, said to himself, "Too bad we have to go so soon."

Aunt Ninette, standing at her open window, looked down into the garden and listened with delight to the children's outbreaks. She even quietly murmured to herself, "We'll miss it when we can't hear them any more."

The children felt in such a festive mood that they planned the most elaborate celebrations for the coming evening, and decided to have a feast such as the garden had never seen before.

Dora entered her little chamber for the last time that night as in a dream. Tomorrow she was to become a permanent inmate of the big house, and the merry children whom she had at first watched with such longing were to be her brothers and sisters. The beautiful garden for which she had also pined was to be her playground and she was to have a father and mother again who would carefully and lovingly watch over her. She would share the children's pleasures as well as their studies, for Lili had announced to her solemnly that she was to have real music lessons from now on. This made her especially happy. All these thoughts flooded Dora's heart and filled her with such happi-

ness that she felt unable to bear it. Her father in Heaven was probably looking down at her and rejoicing with her. When she stood at the open window and looked up at her beloved stars, which gleamed so brightly, she remembered the dark hours when she had looked at them sadly and had forgotten then that her dear God in Heaven was guiding her. Dora fell on her knees and thanked the good God from the bottom of her heart for His kind providence, resolving from that hour never to forget her father's favorite verse. Whatever life should bring, whatever anxiety would oppress her in the future, she resolved to say confidently:

"Yet God keeps watch above us
And doeth all things well."

Uncle Titus and Aunt Ninette engaged their rooms again for the next summer and were already actually looking forward to

their return. Uncle Titus even went so far as to extract a promise from Mrs. Kurd never to let her rooms during the summer to anybody else. He had felt so wonderfully well in her cottage that he left it with many regrets and meant to come back.

On Monday morning the whole family was gathered around the packed travelling carriage, and a hearty leave-taking took place on all sides. Rolf at the last moment led Uncle Titus apart and asked him eagerly if he might send a charade to Karlsruhe now and then. To this Uncle Titus gave the most friendly assurance that this would please him greatly, and he promised to send the answers promptly.

Sly little Hun, who had heard the conversation, also declared at once, "I'll send mine, too!" never doubting but that Mr. Titus's joy would be still greater then. He also thought to himself that the people of

Karlsruhe would never in their lives guess his original charade, which gave him great satisfaction.

Dora and Paula returned to the garden arm in arm, singing gaily:

"We'll never take leave of each other again."

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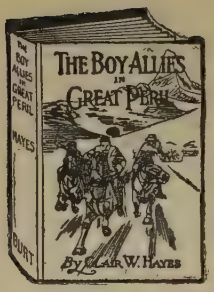


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